

THE
FEELINGS
OF THE
HEART;
OR, THE
HISTORY
OF A
COUNTRY GIRL.

WRITTEN BY HERSELF,
AND ADDRESSED TO
A LADY OF QUALITY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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(2 vols)

COUNTRY GIRL

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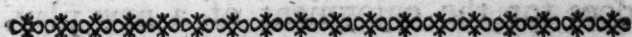
A PLAY OF QUALITY

TWO VOLUMES

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THE
FEELINGS
OF THE
HEART.



LETTER I.



Y present retreat affords me
sufficient leisure to fulfill my
promise. Your request, dear
Lady Grace, shall be complied with.
This rural situation is the fittest in the
world to give a romantic turn to the

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B

ima-

imagination, and puts me in a humour to embellish my narrative. The incidents of my life have, indeed, been a good deal in that style; and would, if I had a genius artfully to piece them together, make no contemptible novel, at least as novels go now-a-days. I feel as much eagerness to begin the task, for the sake of its novelty, as a child does for the enjoyment of a new play-thing.

“A pretty employment,” you will, perhaps say, “for one who has been almost two years, by matrimony, dubbed a “matron” (no very ancient one, however) to write a romance!”

A romance! no, my dear, mine is a true history, though, as I said, filled
with

with romantic incidents. And though the revival of them may, now and then, cost me a tear, I will take courage and go through the recital, as I shall be amply rewarded in bringing to my remembrance the satisfactions and joys that are past. Here it goes then; muster up all your stock of patience. Behold three or four quires of paper which you must travel through, before you reach the end of your journey. One comfort, however, is, that you may make short stages, and also have a very easy carriage. An armed-chair, for example, and now and then a sober nap to refresh you.—But let us put an end to the preface, and enter upon business.

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I hate long genealogies; and you, I dare say, will excuse my enlarging on my birth and parentage. It was, indeed, for many years, obscure and mysterious, even to myself, and it would spoil my narrative were I to make a premature discovery.

My father and mother lived, at the time my history commences, in a little rural retreat, which, like the first happy pair, they cultivated by their own industry. Their landlord, whose castle was about a mile from our humble habitation, seldom honoured the country with his presence. He was a man of pleasure, and left the whole management of affairs to his steward: no advantageous circumstance for his tenants. You find,

find, then, that your little friend had no very flourishing prospects, as to wealth; but to make some amends for this deficiency, my parents spared no pains to form my young mind to wisdom and virtue: and never were tutors better qualified for the task. Their sentiments and manners were far superior to their station. They contracted no intimacy with our rustic neighbours, though never backward to acts of kindness and humanity. This reserve, however, was looked upon as pride; and my father, in derision, was generally called the Gentleman Farmer, and my mother the Lady of the Manor. These envious sneers gave them not the slightest uneasiness; they lived to their

own hearts, and their whole happiness was centered in each other, and me their only child. I was the most primitive little damsel you can imagine, and knew no more of the world, than if I had been bred in the wilds of America. My dress was quite in the rural style, no otherwise distinguished from the other maidens, but by a superior neatness; for I had been taught to carry that virtue, I think I may call it, even to excess. I do not remember ever to have been better pleased with my person, than when I was cloathed in my rustic garments, with my round-eared cap, straw hat, pink ribbons, and natural nosegay in my breast. Nor does the courtly flattery of town-bred beaus, to which

which I have, of late, been accustomed, give me more joy, than that I have felt from the unaffected homage paid me by the rural swains by whom I was styled the Fair Maid of the west. My parents, however, took great care to prevent my forming any improper connections, so that I arrived at the age of fifteen, without having conversed with any male creature, or, indeed, hardly having ventured to raise my eyes to any man's face, but that of my father. During this period, I had been constantly kept at my lessons, which, however, were conveyed in so pleasing a manner, that I never experienced either weariness or disgust. My father, who was my principal tutor, taught me

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both French and Italian : my mother, enough of dancing to form my carriage, and also some proficiency in music, of which I was passionately fond. These were my amusements. The notable part of my education was not neglected; and though I was not accustomed to any laborious employment, yet was I never suffered to be idle, which kept my mind at ease. Thus did the calm and tranquil days of childhood glide away. Ah! how happily compared to the storms and tempests I have since encountered ! You will think, madam, the education I have described, a very improper one for my humble station ; but it was the will of my parents, and they took care to prevent my becoming vain of
my

my little accomplishments. I had, indeed, no acquaintance out of our own family, and, therefore, knew not that I excelled the other nymphs in any thing but person, which, my looking-glass told me, was the handsomest in the village. Vanity is a weed which springs up more or less in every female heart. I own I felt no small pleasure in contemplating my own sweet face, and have often, when alone, thrown down the grave Seneca, to enjoy a more amusing picture, at least, to my taste, than that he has laboured to draw of moral virtue. But though I felt a secret delight in finding myself pretty, I had no idea that my charms would produce the like effect on the opposite sex. I did not

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then know how pleasing it is to please. I could not, however, but observe, that whenever I accompanied my parents in a walk, all the young men we met followed me with their eyes, nor did their rustic encomiums escape my notice; but then, as I esteemed them no more than my due, they did not either affect or surprise me. I might, indeed, have remarked that the other sex never joined their praise. This, had it struck me, would only have been attributed to female reserve; for, as I had not in my own breast experienced the slightest emotion of envy, so I could form no notion of that malignant passion in others. Passion, indeed, of every kind, but that of filial affection, was a stranger to my heart.

heart. I had never studied any but the graveſt authors, ſo that though I had heard love deſcribed, and read of its fatal effects; yet it was always in the cold unempaſſioned ſtyle of hiſtorians or moralists, and therefore made very little impreſſion on my mind. Poetry and romances were carefully kept out of my way. The time was not come when the dormant ſparks of ſenſibility were to be awakened. My heart was then ignorant of its wants; it felt not that aching void which, filled up, is the ſource of ſo much pleaſing inquietude. The preſence of no man I had ever yet met with, had excited the ſlighteſt emotion. I had wiſhes, indeed, but they were rather ambitious than tender. I never ſaw

the castle, for example, but I sigh'd on comparing it to our humble cot. I thought the inhabitants of so splendid a mansion must enjoy a degree of happiness far superior to that I possessed. Frequently would I exclaim, while my father has been reading to me of Kings and Princes, "Ah! what a charming thing is power!"

"And how, Sophia," he used to ask, "would you employ that dangerous prerogative?"

"I would first, my father, make you emperor of the world. And my province should be to seek out suffering virtue, that I might bring them to you for relief."

"But are you then dissatisfied with your present situation, my child?"

"No,

“ No, Sir, but I think both you
 “ and I would make a better figure
 “ in a castle than a cottage.”

“ You are mistaken Sophia : for,
 “ be assured, whatever is, is best.”

“ Aye, so the philosophers say ; but
 “ I think we might be better for all
 “ that.”

One day, when engaged in a con-
 versation of this nature, my mother
 said in a low voice to my father,
 “ Education is not all that distin-
 “ guishes the well-born from the vul-
 “ gar. Sophia will never disgrace her
 “ family.”

This, though in a half whisper, did
 not escape me ; yet I could not, at the
 time, comprehend the mystery of her
 am-

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ambiguous words ; but, nevertheless, they sunk deep into my heart, and ever after I found a secret pride in acting with dignity, that I might not disgrace my family.

Thus, dear Lady Grace, have I brought you to my sixteenth year ; and, that we may both take breath, I think it will not be amiss to finish my first epistle.

Adieu.

LETTER

L E T T E R II.

WELL, Madam, what say you to my first attempt in the scribbling way? I long for your comments; but take care, if you play the critic I have done: and ah, what a misfortune will it be to you should I cut short my delectable history, and end before 'tis well begun! On the other hand, beware of flattery, lest my weak head, unaccustomed to praise in the author-way, should grow giddy, and, instead of plain matter of fact, I should be tempted to transmit to you the wild reveries of a disordered imagination. But enough of trifling: Let us resume the thread of our story.

Lord

Lord G——, the owner of the castle, weary at length of a dissipated life, resigned his liberty to a lady every way worthy of his choice. Soon after the ceremony, in order to avoid the parade and bustle of wedding visits, he thought proper to retire into the country with his fair bride and a few select friends. Orders were sent to his steward to get every thing ready for their reception. They came. All the village nymphs and swains were invited to entertain the company with a rural ball, in honor of the nuptials, and to pay homage to their new lady. The steward informed us that our not appearing on the occasion would be deemed a mark of disrespect. My father consented, tho' not without reluctance.

ance. My little heart, unaccustomed to scenes of gaiety, fluttered with joy at the prospect of this amusement. Yet I felt some mortification at the thoughts of mixing only with the rustics, when my ambition led me to aspire to the company of their superiors. My mother, with the pride of a fond, partial parent, condescended to adorn me for the occasion, and seemed no less satisfied than myself with my appearance. My father, however, with his usual prudence, disapproved of my little finery: yet my dress was simple, tho', for that very reason, perhaps, the more becoming. It is certain I spent some moments at my glass, before we set off, with no small complacency and self approbation. We were the

the last that appeared on the bowling-green, that being allotted for our ball.

My father and mother led me between them towards the company, who were seated in a shady arbour, which, together with the trees that surrounded the green, and which formed it into a kind of amphitheatre, were hung with lamps, intermixed with garlands of flowers. The numerous lights, the music, and the brilliant appearance of my Lord and his guests, gave a flow to my spirits which I had never before experienced. I seemed to tread on air, and tripped along like a wood-nymph. My father and mother paid their respects with a grace superior to their station. My eyes were bent to the ground. I

made

made a low reverence, without having courage to look up.

“Is that your daughter?” said my Lord, addressing himself to my parents.

“Heavens! What a lovely creature!

“Where has she been so long concealed?”

“She was born in the neighbouring village, my Lord.”

“Is it possible, and I never to behold her till this moment?”

I had, as I before told you, Madam, been accustomed to hear my person commended, but not in so courtly a style. His Lordship’s voice too, sounded uncommonly sweet.

“She is, indeed, a pretty little damsel,” said my Lady. “But you should

“not,

“not, my Lord, spoil her by your flattery. Vanity would soon cast a deep shade over her charms.”

“And I fancy,” cried another female, in a satirical tone, “that something has cast a deep shade over my eyes, for, I protest, I see nothing so extraordinary in the little rustic.”

“Nothing extraordinary, Miss G—!” said a still more musical voice than any I had yet heard. “What can be more so, than such uncommon beauty adorned with a modesty no less attractive?”

I could not help raising my bashful eyes as he spoke. Ah, dear Lady Grace, what a figure presented itself! I had never, till that moment, formed an idea of manly beauty. Every charm that could adorn

adorn the sex did I there find united to
 make one perfect object. Amazed, lost
 in wonder at a sight to me so new and
 so engaging, I forgot my timidity, and
 hardly knowing what I did, suffered my
 eyes, unrestrained, to contemplate the
 graces of his person, ignorant of the
 dangerous consequence. His sparkled
 with pleasure, while with seducing ten-
 derness they returned my innocent
 glances. There is no describing my
 till then unfelt emotions: I need not
 to you, Lady Grace, who know, by ex-
 perience, the tender passion. Yet you
 could not know it in the same manner
 that I did. The hearts of those who
 live in the Beau-monde, flirt, perhaps,
 with half a hundred before they seri-
 ously

ously fix, but mine had never felt the slightest palpitation till that fatal moment, and that moment decided my fate. I could have gazed for ever; but my parents, having finished their compliment, awakened me from my pleasing reverie, by leading me away. I turned back my head by an irresistible impulse. No doubt I was exceedingly imprudent; but love, tho' generally in our sex, the most bashful of passions, yet in me, ignorant and unexperienced, produced the contrary effect. I knew not, indeed, the nature of my new sensations. A stranger to the customs imposed on us on these occasions, I suspected not that there was any crime in indulging this new-born sentiment, which

which was at once so natural and so pleasing. And I really believe, had the dear object, who thus first awakened my passions, asked if I beheld him with pleasure, I should, without hesitation, have answered in the affirmative, having ever been accustomed to utter my thoughts without reserve, and taught to abhor a falsehood. I had not been instructed how I ought to have behaved in a situation so delicate; but, after all, I do not see we have any reason to blush, at discovering a partiality for an amiable object. True love is the noblest of all passions. The moment I experienced its influence, I was inspired with a virtuous emulation, I wished to render myself worthy of his esteem. These thoughts

thoughts engrossed me while my parents led me from him. When I approached, I seemed to tread on air, but now my reluctant steps were slow and pensive. The swains flocked round me in crowds to engage me for a partner. I drew back disgusted, and should have refused them all, had not my father ordered me to accept of one whom he judged more worthy than the rest of my hand. He led me to join the set, while I secretly whispered to myself, "Ah! what a difference between man and man! Why was I born to this humble lot! Alas! I shall never know content again." Yet, dissatisfied as I was with him, my partner was reckoned the handsomest of our village youths;

and,

and while I repined at my fate, half
 the young maids envied my felicity; so
 natural is it to think our neighbours
 happier than ourselves. Happiness! alas,
 where does it exist but in our own ima-
 gination? 'Tis a phantom which we pur-
 sue through life, but never overtake it.

I danced for some time with great
 negligence: my wonted sprightliness en-
 tirely forsook me. Wholly lost in
 thought, I neither heard the music, nor
 the artless praises my delighted partner
 bestowed on me. The company drew
 nearer. Lord Edmond fixed his whole
 attention on me. This roused me from
 my stupidity, and a desire to please my
 lovely enslaver took place of my late
 indifference.

I believe all females have a tincture of coquetry in their composition. I exerted every captivating grace I was mistress of, and when I perceived him engaged in conversation with Miss G——, I felt myself piqued, and endeavoured to be revenged on him, by encouraging the assiduity of my partner.

You will, perhaps, wonder that a young, inexperienced girl like me should think of such an expedient. *Nature* taught it me. I judged of *his* feelings by my *own*. When I felt myself mortified at his attention to another, I fancied that, by following his example, I should produce in him the same uneasy sensation. I succeeded to my wish. He forgot his fair companion, his eyes assumed a melancholy

melancholy languor, and an air of sadness
 clouded his late animated features.
 The moment I beheld this change, my
 vivacity also forsook me; so perfectly
 had my heart already learned to sym-
 pathize with his. My partner became
 odious to me: I could not bear to give
 him my hand in the course of the dance.
 On pretence of being fatigued, I re-
 tired to one of the mossy seats, and
 took my place between my father and
 mother, that I might keep him at a
 distance.

Mean time Miss G——, gayly seiz-
 ing Lord Edmond by the arm, insisted
 on his joining in the dance. He complied,
 tho' with visible reluctance. I was now
 sorry that I had left the set. My heart

thrilled with transport at the bare idea of being so near him. He would have spoken to me, I should have touched his hand. What a vast progress had love already made in my susceptible breast! Alas, I made no resistance to the sweet invader. Govern'd by its power, I started from my seat, and again joined the sprightly throng. My Lord's eyes sparkled with joy at my approach. He came to turn me. Glancing a look full of tenderness, he eagerly pressed my hands in his. A blush overspread my cheeks, and an artless sigh heaved my bosom. No doubt he was sensible of the conquest he had gained, for he appeared quite intoxicated with delight.

After

After dancing some hours we sat down to a rural banquet, where each swain, with his nymph by his side, passed the remainder of the evening in joy and festivity. Our noble entertainers condescended to mix amongst the rustic party, and encouraged them to innocent freedom. Lord Edmond took care to place himself next me, his partner on the other hand. The former found an opportunity, without being observed, softly to whisper in my ear, "Dearest Sophia, I adore you, and shall die with grief if you do not return my passion. Tell me, my charming maid, may I hope you do not hate me?"

"Hate you, Sir! Good heaven, how is it possible? I never saw any body I liked half so well."

"En-

“Enchanting simplicity!” returned he pressing my hand; “Amiable innocence
“How you intoxicate my senses! Ah
“how I love you!”

I love you! What a charm, dear Lady Grace, is there in those few words from the person we approve!

In playing at forfeits, he was soon after commanded to salute me. It was the first kiss I ever received from any man but my father. I almost fainted in his arms. Luckily the company were too intent on their amusements to pay much attention to my emotions. My father, however, whose eyes watched all my motions, saw, alas, too late the danger to which he had exposed me. He instantly arose, and observing that I looked

pale

pale with fatigue, begged Lord G——'s permission to conduct me home. His request was granted. He took my hand. Lord Edmond heaved a mournful sigh. Tears started into my eyes at this painful separation, but I durst not disobey the will of my parents. They led me away.

"Sophia," said my father, when we got home, "what is become of your engaging chearfulness? I fancy you did not relish our late amusements, they have made you thoughtful; but you are now returned to peace and tranquility, which, I trust, will soon restore your spirits, and it will be long ere you are again under a necessity of visiting the castle."

“ Ah, Sir, What do you say? Alas,
“ ’tis there only I can recover my gaiety.
“ Lord Edmond’s presence—”

“ Lord Edmond!” interrupted he in
an angry accent. “ What is Lord Ed-
“ mond to you?”

“ Dear Sir, is he not the most amiable
“ of men?”

“ What do I hear? Imprudent, unfor-
“ tunate girl! But this is what I feared.
“ Cursed be the hour in which I exposed
“ my artless child to this fatal tempta-
“ tion.—But tell me all. Have you da-
“ red to listen to the seducer? What did
“ he say?”

“ Alas, Sir, you terrify me. Why do
“ you look so stern? How have I offend-
“ ed? I am sure Lord Edmond would

“ not

Alas, "not injure me. On the contrary, he
 "says he loves me."

"Ah, and is not that the highest
 "injury? But 'tis I only am to blame:
 "Your ignorance is your excuse. Love
 "you! No, my poor deluded child, his
 "telling you so was a proof of his hate."

"He hate me, Sir! O no, it is not in
 "his gentle nature to hate any one, and
 "why should he hate me, who never did
 "him any injury?"

"Yet, Sophia, he will seek to render
 "you despicable, an object of detesta-
 "tion. I see he has already made but
 "too much impression on your innocent
 "heart. It was what I feared from the
 "first moment I beheld him, formed as
 "he is to please: But from henceforth

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“ never expect to see him more. His
 “ rank, his fortune places insurmount-
 “ able bars between you. Banish him
 “ then, even from your thoughts, as you
 “ value a father’s peace, as you expect
 “ his blessing.”

I wept.

“ Must I not think of him, Sir?
 “ How can I avoid it? It is the first of
 “ your commands I ever found impossi-
 “ ble to obey. No, I never can forget
 “ Lord Edmond. I never can cease to
 “ love him. Where is the crime?”

At this he flew into a rage. My mother endeavoured to calm his emotions.

“ Let us talk more gently to her,
 “ my dear. Her ignorance, her artless
 “ innocence must plead her pardon. We

“ must

" must mildly convince her of the dan-
 " ger, of the indiscretion of her conduct.
 " She was ever of a tractable disposition,
 " and will, I make no doubt, listen to
 " reason. My dear Sophia," turning to
 me, " you know not that you have been
 " guilty of the highest imprudence. You
 " say you love Lord Edmond. Nothing
 " should tempt you to so indelicate a
 " confession, were he even your equal;
 " but as you are situated, you ought to
 " die rather than indulge a passion which
 " may be attended with consequences so
 " fatal."

" I cannot comprehend you, Madam.
 " I am lost in astonishment. Ah, what
 " has Lord Edmond done to make you
 " so much his enemy! Have you not

“taught me to love and distinguish me-
“rit? And who has more engaging qua-
“lities, both in person and mind, than
“Lord Edmond?”

“Unfortunate ignorance of the
“world!” exclaimed my father. “I
“find it is not enough to be ignorant of
“vice: in order to guard against it, it
“must be known.”

My mother made no answer; but
opening a book-case, took down a vo-
lume of Pamela.

“This,” said she, “is perhaps a dan-
“gerous instructor, but dangerous dif-
“tempers require dangerous remedies.
“Read this, Sophia,” continued she,
“and learn from it to guard against the
“artful snares of men.”

I re-

me. I retired with it to my room, opened
qua- it with indifference, but the story soon
than engaged my attention. It displayed to me
a new world of wonders. I sat up most
the part of the night, and finished the vo-
“I lume. I now saw my late imprudence in
t of the strongest light. I imagined myself
, it the suffering, humble Pamela, and the
amiable Lord Edmond was converted
but into the intriguing Mr. B——. I was
vo- astonished at a character of which, till
then, I had not formed the slightest idea,
an- and was ready to exclaim, “Can there
dif- “be such? and have they peace of
es. “mind?” I then clearly comprehended
he, the cause of my parents just apprehen-
he sions. I saw the danger to which my
re- ignorance would have exposed me.

“Thank

“Thank heaven,” cried I, weeping, “
“have now gained some knowledge of
“the perfidious sex. They flatter but
“to betray unsuspecting innocence
“Lord Edmond, however, shall find
“himself mistaken. Presuming on his
“rank and my simplicity, he, no doubt,
“believes me an easy prey. Ah, why
“was I not taught the necessary caution
“of concealing my sentiments, ere I
“beheld his seducing charms? Doubtless
“I have betrayed to him the weakness
“of my heart. I blush at my folly, and
“never again shall I be able to look him
“in the face. No, I must never see him
“more. O virtue, what a sacrifice! But
“if I should meet him, how different
“shall now be my conduct! I will re-
“pair

g, "pair my fault. Love, I trust, has not
 lge o "yet made any very lasting impressi-
 er bu "on my heart. No, I will conquer it,
 cence "or die in the laudable attempt."

find A shower of tears followed this reso-
 n his lution, so loth was I to part with those
 oubt, emotions which had been the source of
 why so much pleasing pain. Weary at last
 ution with my tormenting reflections, I threw
 ere I myself on the bed, where I every mo-
 ntless ment said, "Lord Edmond, I will think
 kness "of thee no more." But, alas, did he
 and not even then wholly employ my
 him thoughts? At length, sleep happily
 him came to my relief and closed my eyes.

L E T T E R

LETTER III.

IT was not without the highest confusion that I next day appeared before my parents. I threw myself at their feet.

“Pardon,” said I, “an unfortunate girl, who erred through ignorance. I now see my indiscretion in the strongest light. But for your watchful care, I know not what might have been the consequence, or how far the weakness of my heart might have led me. But I am now instructed to guard against its dangerous emotions, and trust my dawning passion is already vanquished.”

They embraced me with a transport of joy, and my mother exclaimed with

an

an air of triumph, "I knew my Sophia
 "would be an honor to her family."
 Then both my parents gave me the most
 prudent instruction in regard to my fu-
 ture conduct. These kind of instructions
 were, till then, unknown to me. It was
 the first time my heart stood in need of
 them.

It was already late in the day, for I
 had slept but little the preceding night,
 and therefore lay longer than usual. We
 were deeply engaged in the subject be-
 fore mentioned, when, behold the door
 opened, and to my infinite surprise, in-
 came Lord and Lady G——, Miss
 G——, Lord Edmond, and Sir Richard
 Melvil.

Tho'

Tho' my father would, for many reasons, gladly have dispensed with the honor of this visit, yet was he not the least disconcerted at the presence of his noble guests. He received them with an easy but respectful politeness.

"We have," said Lady G—
"been making a tour through the village, and chose your agreeable cottage to rest ourselves in after our walk."
"We wished, also, to know how your daughter was after her last night's fatigue, as she was indisposed when she left us."

"Your Ladyship," returned my father, "does her great honor by this obliging enquiry. She is perfectly recovered."

"Are

"Are you sure of that?" cried Lord G——, taking my hand. "I think she still looks a little pale."

A blush, which at that moment overspread my cheeks, left no room for this remark. I was ready to expire with confusion at the presence of Lord Edmond: never, from the moment he entered, had I dared to glance my eyes towards him."

Miss G—— flung herself into a seat, and, fanning herself with great violence, said, "Ah, Lord, you have murdered me with your odious country ramble! "One had need to have the strength of an elephant to endure the fatigue. And "then such Hottentots as one is obliged to converse with! This morning's visitors, for example. Did you ever, Sir

"Richard,

“Richard, behold such animals? The
“mother, fat as a barn-door fowl, and
“her two ambling daughters plump as
“new cramm’d turkies, with full blown
“cheeks like a highland bag-pipe, and
“rosy as a catharine pear.”

“I vow,” said Lord G——, “your
“description is truly picturesque, but
“you should have added the handker-
“chief, in each of their rosy fists, which
“they incessantly applied to their faces,
“for they were most comfortably
“warm.”

“Ah, Lard, you indelicate wretch!
“I ficken at the bare recollection.
“Warm, indeed! ready to melt with
“their journey, jumbled as they had
“been, and almost jolted to a jelly in
“their

"their antiquated machine, by them
"miscalled a coach."

"Fye, my dear Bell," cried Lady
G——, "you are too fatirical. I dare
"say, tho' they do not affect the fine
"Lady, they are very good kind of
"people at the bottom."

"I shall not dispute that point," re-
turned she, laughing, "for I had only a
"slight glimpse of their splaw feet; but
"at the top, I'll swear no Friezeland
"hens could equal them. I longed ex-
"ceedingly to have demolished their
"frouzy head-pieces, bending as they
"were under a load of feathers, pon-
"pons, beads, ribbons, and blond-lace."

While this town-bred belle was thus
displaying her modish airs and graces,

Lord

46 THE FEELINGS

Lord Edmond placed himself by me as I stood at the window. I trembled at his approach, but endeavoured to conceal my emotions under a mask of cool indifference. The sash was open: I employed myself in propping a rose, which, being full blown, was too heavy for its slender stem.

“Happy flower,” said he in a low voice, “that can thus engage my Sophia’s attention.”

“*Your* Sophia!” returned I disdainfully.

“Ah, would to heaven you were mine,” sighed he, attempting to take my hand, which I hastily drew back.

“These freedoms, Sir, are too great a condescension in you, and it would ill become me to permit them.” “My

as "My G—d! What a change!" ex-
 his claimed he, mournfully. "Ah, Who
 real has taught you this cruel reserve?
 in- Who, what has prejudiced you a-
 em- gainst the unfortunate Edmond?"
 ich, "Your rank, your fortune, Sir. I
 r its know my humble distance, and shall
 be careful to maintain it."

low "I must interrupt your *tête à tête*,"
 So- did Lord G——, approaching us;
 you shall not, Edmond, be suffered
 lain- to monopolize my little blushing So-
 phia. Can you forgive me, my dear
 were girl, for putting a stop to the fine
 take things he has been saying to you?"

. "I am very ignorant, my Lord, and
 great but little able to distinguish between
 old ill the fine things you talk of, and com-

My "mon

“ mon conversation ; you would, there
 “ fore, do well to address yourselves
 “ to those who are better able to do
 “ justice to your town-bred politeness.
 “ I am a mere rustic.”

“ A rustic !” exclaimed Lord G——,

“ By my soul you have more wit than
 “ half the fine Ladies I have met
 “ with.”

“ I make no pretensions to any, my
 “ Lord, nor desire to possess that ta-
 “ lent, since, I have been told, it is a
 “ very dangerous one, and generally
 “ accompanied with ill nature ; and of
 “ that, I hope, no body will accuse
 “ me.”

“ But of cruelty, Sophia, of scorn-
 “ ful indifference, nay, even caprice,”

whif- V

here whispered Lord Edmond, "I fear we
elves may."

For the first time, since his entrance,
o do raised my eyes to his. A mournful
ness. dejection overspread his fine features.

— was affected, and a half-smother'd
than sigh escaped me. Lord G— was, by
met his time, retired to some distance, and
engaged in a private conversation with
my his Lady.

t ta- "Tell me, my dear girl," resumed
is a Lord Edmond, in a plaintive voice,
erally "What is become of that amiable in-
nd of "nocent frankness which last night
ccuse "rendered you so adorable, and which
"filled me with such delightful tranf-
corn- "ports? Say, my angel, how have I
rice," "offended? Ah, if you knew what

whif- VOL. I. D "passes

“ passes in my heart, you would not
 “ treat me with such mortifying indif-
 “ ference, you would not suspect my
 “ honor.”

“ About yours, my Lord, I do not
 “ concern myself, my task must be
 “ carefully to guard my own.”

“ And what monster,” exclaimed he
 passionately, “ would dare, would wish
 “ to injure it ?”

While he spoke, my father, whose
 watchful eyes had, from the first, been
 fixed on us, now drew near.

“ I fear, my Lord, you will find but
 “ little amusement in conversing with
 “ an ignorant country girl.”

“ You pay but an ill compliment
 “ to my taste,” returned Lord Ed-
 mond :

mond: "I know no-body's company
whom I would prefer to that of your
amiable daughter's."

"But yours, my Lord," resumed he,
with some haughtiness, "may not be
quite so proper for her."

Before Lord Edmond had time to
answer, Lady G— came up to us.

"We have," said she, smiling, "been
laying a plot to rob you of your
Sophia. What say you, my good
friend, will you permit me to be her
protectress? I am much prejudiced
in her favour. If you will give me
leave to take her with me to the
castle, I shall esteem it an obliga-
tion."

D 2

"Your

“ Your Ladyship does me great ho-
“ nor by this generous proposal. Do
“ not accuse me of ingratitude for de-
“ clining your offer ; but, pardon me,
“ Madam, I cannot part with my child.
“ She is useful to her mother ; and is,
“ besides, almost the only comfort that
“ is left to cheer the evening of our
“ days. It is true, we are poor ; but
“ still, thank heaven, not yet reduced
“ to the severe necessity of yielding
“ to others the charge of our So-
“ phia.”

“ I did not,” said my Lady, “ mean
“ to offend you. It was at my Lord’s
“ request I made the offer, though no
“ less agreeable to myself. And had
“ you agreed to it, be assured, I should
“ have

“ have been strictly watchful of my
“ charge.”

“ I do not doubt it,” returned my
father ; “ your Ladyship is all conde-
“ scending goodness, and I hope, as a
“ proof of it, you will pardon my de-
“ clining the unmerited favour.”

At that moment Miss G— started
up, crying, in her lively way, “ Come,
“ good folks, I presume you have seen
“ enough of rural felicity, for one day,
“ at least. And you, Lord Edmond,
“ fond as you affect to be of simple
“ nature, have, by this time, I imagine,
“ had a sufficient dose.”

“ Nature, Madam, can never satiate,
“ ’tis only art and affectation that will
“ not stand the test.”

“ Ah, Lard, moral and sentimental
“ to the last,” cried she, laughing.
“ Come, Sir Richard, let’s be gone.
“ Adieu, my little rustic,” turning to
me. “ Harkee, child,” continued she,
in a half whisper, “ let me give you
“ one piece of advice. Don’t be vain
“ of the fine things that have been said
“ to you. Courtiers know no other
“ language than flattery : do not, there-
“ fore, toss your pretty head with self-
“ complacency. It is not your beau-
“ ty, believe me, that excites it. They
“ only play upon your ignorance, in
“ order to display their wit. Take my
“ word for it, this is the truest thing
“ you have heard to-day.”

“ I am

"I am quite of your opinion, madam," returned I, curtsying.

She gave her hand to Lord Edmond, who did not seem very sensible of the favour. He cast a mournful glance at me, and, bowing to my father, led her out. Lord G— then asked his Lady if her proposal had been accepted. When he heard of my father's refusal, he appeared a good deal disappointed, but insisted, however, that he should frequently bring me to the castle; to which, my father made no answer, but a respectful bow.

When the company were gone, he demanded a particular account of my conversation with Lord Edmond. I re-

peated it word for word. He was pleased to express great approbation at my conduct. My mother was delighted, called me her dearest Sophia, her prudent noble child, and affectionately embraced me. My heart was elate with their praise; a conscious, laudable pride banished, for some time, every other emotion; but, alas! too soon did the lovely Edmond's image, with all its attractive graces, return to disturb my repose. I retired to my room, and there indulged myself in a shower of tears. I took up my guitar, and, in a plaintive voice, soothed my mind, while I sung the following lines;

“ Oh

- “ Oh had he been, by fate, decreed:
 “ Some humble cottage swain,
 “ With mine his fleecy flock to feed,
 “ On yonder flow’ry plain,
 “ What bliss had I been born to taste,
 “ Which now I ne’er must know !
 “ Ye envious pow’rs, why have you plac’d
 “ My humble lot so low ?”

I then, taking up a volume of Pamela, in that imaginary fair one’s distress, soon lost the remembrance of my own.

Perhaps your Ladyship would wish to have a more particular description of Lord G—, and his guests ; a sketch of their characters shall finish this epistle.

Lord G— is a man of pleasure and intrigue. He was, at the time of his marriage, about thirty years of age, but appeared rather older from the irregular life he had led. His person is extremely genteel, his face agreeable and animated. He has a good understanding, a lively manner of expressing his sentiments. His behaviour is affable and polite. He has the appearance of great good nature; but is, in reality, self-willed. Unaccustomed to controul, he has violent passions, which he indulged too freely to leave me room to say much in praise of his morals. He had a great esteem for his lady; but love had the least share in his marriage. Her rank, her fortune, were equal to his own. His

friends

friends regarded it as an advantageous alliance. His heart happened, at the time, to be disengaged from any other attachment. He yielded, if not with violent transports, at least, without regret to their remonstrances, and resigned his freedom to a Lady every way worthy of the sacrifice.

Lady G— was one of the most amiable women in the world: her person pleasing, though not remarkably handsome: her manner engaging, her temper mild, her sense refined. She loved her husband, and was kindly indulgent even to his faults.

Miss G—, his Lordship's only sister, was about five and twenty: a fine showy woman; but whose features

would not bear examination. She was lively, haughty, and affected: her understanding good, her temper bad, and her heart still worse. A match had been secretly proposed by the two families, between her and Lord Edmond. He, however, took but little pains to promote it: and though very intimate, had never discovered any partiality for her, to her great mortification; for she had long beheld him with a favourable eye, and spared no endeavours to add him to the list of her admirers. But Lord Edmond was not an easy conquest, and visited her more to oblige the duke his father, than himself.

Lord Edmond—What, Lady Grace, shall I say of him? “Is he not more
“ than

“ than painting can express?” Is he not elegant, handsome, graceful, and engaging? Yes, you have a thousand times pronounced him the most amiable man you ever beheld. I, therefore, shall say nothing; let his actions speak for him; they will do him more justice than the weak efforts of my pen.

As to Sir Richard, he is one of those common characters, and common forms, which one meets with everywhere, without exciting the least attention: nothing striking, either in person or mind: a meer fine gentleman, pert, vain, and insipid.

Adieu.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

I Am now entering upon an event, the remembrance of which still draws tears from my eyes : an event which robbed me of the best, the tenderest, of mothers. Ah, Madam, and it was in preserving my worthless life, that she sacrificed her own. Let me pause, to indulge a flow of painful, grateful emotions, at the melancholy recollection of her fate. Never will it be effaced from my memory.

One fatal night, my parents were alarmed with the dreadful cry of fire, while the neighbours were endeavouring to force a passage into our house, which

which was already in flames. Unfortunately their cries did not awaken me. My parents lay in the lower part of the house: their escape was, thereby, rendered easy; but, alas! my safety soon engrossed all their attention. The next dwelling, where the fire began, was already consumed, and ours was soon to share the same fate, to the loss of all the little wealth my father had acquired by many years industry, and to the utter ruin of our affairs. The terror which seized my parents, for some time, deprived them of all recollection; and the charitable neighbours had conveyed them to a place of safety, almost without their knowledge; but, the moment they came more perfectly to their senses,

they

they both, in a breath, uttering a scream of anguish, again darted into the flames to save their unfortunate daughter. My mother was first: my father, eagerly following her, stumbled over something that lay in his passage. The people who were near, now despairing to save any of our lives but his, lifted him up, and, by force, bore him again into the street, while he struggled and vowed not to survive, wringing his hands, and exclaiming, that he had now nothing left which could tempt him to drag on a wretched existence. In the mean time; my dear mother, in spite of all the danger that surrounded her, had made shift to reach my room; one half of which was already consumed. I was just awakened.

awakened by the sinoak, which almost
 stifled me. I started out of bed, she
 clasped me in her arms. "Oh, my
 child, my child," said she, "how shall
 I save you?" I was stupified with
 terror. She led me to the door, the
 flames burst in upon us, there was no
 longer any possibility of escaping by
 that way. We ran to the window, and,
 with some difficulty, got it open. The
 people below, had placed a feather-bed
 to receive us. I now, a little restored
 to my senses, conjured my mother to
 escape. She stayed not to answer; but,
 snatching me up in her arms, threw
 me out, and was, as they afterwards
 told me, preparing to follow; but,
 alas! in a moment she disappeared; the
 boards

boards having sunk under her feet. My father, at this fatal sight, uttered a piercing groan, and fell senseless to the earth. My fall had reduced me to the same condition; but, ah, we too soon awoke to all the horrors of our fate. It is not in words to describe it; permit me then, Madam, to draw a veil over the melancholy scene.

When the fire was extinguished, they searched for, and found, the remains of my beloved mother, which were put in a coffin; and, at my father's desire, placed in the room, that the friendly people had furnished us with; for we had now, alas! no home. My father seated himself on the ground; the melancholy object full in his view, his hands

My hands clasped, his unutterable anguish
 expressed only by his heart-rending
 groans; for the first, almost distracted,
 emotions of grief, had subsided into a
 solemn silent sadness. I threw myself
 on my knees, by the coffin, bathed in
 tears, my hair dishevelled, hanging about
 my shoulders, my hands and eyes raised
 to heaven, earnestly wishing to be,
 like her, deprived of a wretched ex-
 istence which was now become insup-
 portable.

“Rash girl,” at last exclaimed my
 father, “learn to submit to the will of
 heaven.” Ah, do you wish me also,
 to be deprived of *you*, the only con-
 solation that is left me?”

I arose,

I arose, and throwing myself into his arms, sobbed out, "No, my father, never, never can I wish to leave you." "But, alas! what will become of us thus destitute and forlorn?"

He made no answer, but mixed his tears with mine. In this miserable manner did we spend the day, refusing all sustenance, and incapable of receiving the least ray of comfort.

I had again placed myself by the dear remains of my beloved parent, embalming her with my fast-falling tears, when the door opened, and, by a light that was carried before them, I discovered Lady G— and Lord Edmond. My father just turned his head: it was no time for ceremony. They stood, for some moments,

to his moments, gazing on us in silence. My
 Father Lady held her handkerchief at her eyes;
 e you or could Lord Edmond prevent the
 of us gentle tear of humanity from stealing
 down his cheek. At last, my father,
 ed his with a sort of majesty in his air, ad-
 man-ressed them in the plaintive, heart-
 ng all-ffecting voice of woe.

“Curiosity, or, perhaps, a nobler
 motive, has brought you to behold
 the most wretched of mankind, bend-
 ing beneath a weight of years and af-
 flictions. There,” pointing to the coffin,
 lies my better half: my wife, my
 friend, the soothing companion of
 my wearisome pilgrimage. The mer-
 ciless fire, has, also, in one night, de-
 voured all my little substance, all
 “that

“ that many years of painful industry
“ had scraped together. After a life of
“ care and vicissitude, I had fondly
“ hoped to spend the evening of my
“ days in peace; but now I find my-
“ self reduced to poverty, when I am
“ unfit for labour. Misery and want
“ stare me in the face; nor have I a
“ friend on earth to whom I can ap-
“ ply for relief. Yet how little, were
“ it not for thee, my Sophia, would
“ cares of this nature affect me!”

At this, Lord Edmond, starting as
from a dream, at the sound of my name,
advanced, and, seizing my father's hand,
“ My friend, my brother,” cried he,
“ for such you are, by stronger ties
“ than those of nature, by the power-

“ full

ful ties of humanity, how much do
 I sympathize in your distress ! Provi-
 dence permits an inequality amongst
 mankind, that society may be the
 more firmly united by the strong
 bands of mutual good offices. I will
 be your friend : suffer me to repair
 the injuries of fortune, and the obli-
 gation will be mine ; since tis more
 blessed to give than to receive. Do
 not thus yield to despondency. Be
 it my care to provide you a com-
 fortable habitation."

" Your generous, noble manner,
 my Lord," said my father, " adds
 to the obligations you would con-
 fer."

" Talk

“Talk not of obligations,” interrupted Lord Edmond: “have I not
“proved that the benefit is on my
“side?”

Charmed with his graceful manner,
I could no longer restrain the emotions
of my gratitude. I threw myself at his
feet: He hastily raised me; but, before
he had time to speak, Lady G— took
my hand.

“Kneel not to *him*, Sophia, he is
“your *father's* friend: you shall not
“be indebted to him: *I* claim the
“privilege of being *your* protectress.”

I respectfully pressed her hand to my
lips.

“Generous Lady G—, how shall
“I find words to express the sense I

“have

“ have of your goodness ? But suffer me,
 “ also, to be grateful for the favours
 “ bestowed on a parent so justly dear
 “ to me.”

Pardon me, Lady Grace, I grow too
 particular, and shall tire your patience:
 Suffer me then to conduct you to the
 castle, where, with my father's consent,
 (a consent which necessity compelled
 him to grant) I accompanied my bene-
 factress. Lord Edmond, who would not
 yield to any one the pleasure of obliging,
 fixed my father in a comfortable habi-
 tation, and a farm, on an estate he had
 in the neighbourhood of Lord G——.

He would have settled, also, on him an
 annuity for life, but my father declined
 the favour; saying, the obligations he

have VOL. I. E had

had already conferred would fit the lighter on him when he knew he was by his industry doing all in his power to repay it. To express what I felt at the thoughts of this first separation from my parent is impossible: sighs and tears were my only language, while he, with anxious care, endeavoured, by his prudent advice, to arm me against the danger to which my new situation might expose me.

“ You was charmed with Lord Edmond’s generosity,” said he. “ Far would I be, my Sophia, from wishing to damp the just overflowings of your gratitude, and equally loth to vitiate the native simplicity and candour of your heart, by that narrow,

“ inliberal

" illiberal passion, mistrust. An innocent
 " mind will judge of others by its own
 " integrity. Long as I have lived in the
 " world, and often as I have been de-
 " ceived, I never yet could adopt that
 " selfish, tho' perhaps prudent maxim,
 " to treat a friend as if he might one
 " day become an enemy. Your mind,
 " my dear, is hitherto uncorrupted;
 " you are the child of nature. Little do
 " you know of the vices and follies of
 " mankind. Long may that happy igno-
 " rance continue. But take care, Sophia,
 " to distinguish the action from the man:
 " You cannot too much love and admire
 " the former. Be grateful for the bene-
 " fit, but dwell not on the outward
 " graces, the charms of him that con-

“ferred it. Let not your eyes mislead
“your heart, that heart which, you own,
“was but too much prejudiced in his
“favour. Ah, let not him at least per-
“ceive it, lest his future charities should,
“hereafter, be mixed with a base alloy.
“His rank and fortune place him at so
“vast a distance, that you ought not
“to bestow on him a single thought.
“Avoid him then, listen not to the
“tempter, guard against your natural
“sensibility. I do not suspect your vir-
“tue: but tho’ that might be secure,
“yet an attachment like this would be
“the ruin of your peace. Weep not,
“my Sophia,” continued he, embracing
me; “forgive the anxiety of a parent
“whose happiness depends on yours.

“It

“ It is the last lecture of this nature I
 “ shall trouble you with. Thus warned,
 “ I do not doubt but you will act with
 “ prudence, and, as a worthy friend of
 “ mine used to observe, *that* virtue
 “ which requires to be ever guarded,
 “ is scarce worth the centinel.”

I threw my arms round his neck.

“ Oh, Sir,” said I, “ am I not your
 “ daughter? Am I not daughter to the
 “ most prudent, the most virtuous of
 “ women? Can I deviate from the na-
 “ ture I derive from you? Can I forget
 “ the bright example; the principles
 “ which, with such unwearied pains, you
 “ both endeavoured to instill into my
 “ youthful mind? No, I will die ere I
 “ disgrace either myself or you. Lord

E 3

“ Edmond

“Edmond can be nothing to me. I
 “have severely lamented my first indis-
 “cretion: My ignorance misled me,
 “but you have dispelled the darkness.
 “I see my error, and my dawning passion
 “is, I trust, already vanquished.”

“My sensible, noble child,” exclaimed
 he, “this assurance has banished all
 “my doubts and fears.” Then, repeat-
 edly pressing me to his breast, he be-
 sought heaven to be my protector, and
 bade me a mournful adieu.

LETTER

L E T T E R V.

I Continued for some days in the lowest dejection, before I could reconcile myself to my new situation. My province was to wait on Lady G——, and never sure was there so kind, so indulgent a mistress. I had no connexion with any of the servants but the house-keeper, whom I found to be an exceeding good kind of woman. She took a great fancy to me, and, by her maternal behaviour, made me less sensible of my irreparable loss of the best of mothers. I seldom left Lady G——'s dressing-room, where, from morning to night, I employed myself with my needle. The before-men-

tioned good woman was my only companion. She was of an exceeding cheerful disposition, and did all in her power to amuse me.

The second morning after my arrival at the castle, Miss G—— came flouncing into the room where I sat, followed by Lord Edmond, Sir Richard, and an elderly gentleman, whom I had not before seen.

“Where is your Lady, child?” cried she.

“I believe, Madam,” answered I, without raising my eyes, “she has accompanied his Lordship into the park.”

“Lard, how the creature blushes! Are you afraid to look up, girl? If

“not

“not conscious of guilt, why fear to
“meet our eyes?”

“She may well be afraid to meet the
“eyes of the men, at least,” cried the
stranger, smiling, “since she must be
“sensible of the thefts she has committed.
“I vow she has even stolen my heart,
“which till now bade defiance to all her
“sex’s charms.”

At this unwith’d-for, disagreeable
flattery, my cheeks assumed a still deep-
er die, and I made a motion to retire,
but he seized my hand.

“You do not so easily escape us, my
“pretty maid. I must insist on restitu-
“tion.”

“Let the girl alone,” said Miss G—,
frowning; “’tis cruel thus to turn her
“into ridicule.”

“Ridicule, Madam! Look at her,
“and see if ’tis possible to find room
“for that. No, on my word, I spoke in
“sober sadness. Not much am I addict-
“ed to flattery; as you, I fancy, have
“experienced. And tho’ I should be
“sorry to add to that engaging, but,
“to her, painful confusion, I find it
“difficult to restrain my admiration,
“when I behold such unaffected loveli-
“ness. I know not,” continued he, ad-
dressing himself to me, “what it is to
“disguise my real sentiments, and I
“think you have too much sweet hu-
“mility to be spoiled by the praises of
“an old fellow like me. Yet I believe I
“may pretend to some little knowledge
“of what is amiable in your sex. No-
“body

"body is more delicate in their ideas of
"female merit."

"Nobody is more whimsical, you
"should have said," interrupted Miss
G——; "but I swear, our spruce Abi-
"gail has wrought a wonderful refor-
"mation, you are absolutely quite gal-
"lant this morning. Even I shall now
"stand a chance for a few compliments,
"tho' it will be the very first time I
"ever could extract any."

"Some small reformation must, also,
"be wrought in you, Madam, ere it
"comes to that. When, like this sweet
"girl, you give nature fair play, and
"banish affectation; when, in your
"dress, you, like her, substitute elegant
"simplicity in the room of that horrid

“disguise which fashion imposes ; why,
 “then, perhaps, I shall be inclined to
 “allow that, if you were more genteel,
 “had better features, a good complex-
 “ion, a more graceful air, and less
 “pride, you would be a very passable
 “figure.”

“Horrid wretch!”

“Truth, Madam, can never hope to
 “please a fine lady.”

“O, no more thou snarler, thy com-
 “pany is as unwelcome to our sex, as a
 “true looking-glass is to a decayed
 “beauty.”

So saying she turned to me.

“Well, Sophia,” cried she, “for
 “that, they tell me, is your fine roman-
 “tic name, and all that your godfathers

“and

“ and godmothers seem to have be-
 “ stowed on you : no very valuable gift,
 “ it must be owned.”

“ To me, Madam, it is valuable, be-
 “ cause it was the name of a parent
 “ infinitely dear ; nor do I see that it
 “ is any way unbecoming my humble
 “ station. I never knew (whatever ima-
 “ ginary dignity *titles* may give) that
 “ any particular idea was affixed to
 “ names.”

“ True,” interrupted Sir Richard,
 “ for as Juliet says,

“ A rose, by any other name, would smell as

“ sweet :

“ So Sophy would, were she not Sophy
 “ call’d.”

Miss

Miss G— frowned.

“ The simple wench,” said she, “ will
“ take all you utter in her praise for
“ gospel. It is absolutely cruel thus to
“ make a fool of her. You have al-
“ ready taught her to be pert; but if
“ she does not change her tone, I
“ prophesy my sister’s charity will soon
“ cool. That, take my word for it, is
“ not the way to please her.”

“ Ladies,” said Mr Osgood, “ are
“ not easily pleased by those who are
“ placed under them in a state of de-
“ pendance.”

“ You, indeed,” cried Miss G—, in-
“ terrupting him, “ have reason to pro-
“ nounce them ill to please, since I
“ suspect

"suspect you have been rather unsuccessful in that way."

"True, Madam," returned he, "particularly with those Ladies whose favour I did not think it worth my while to gain. But what I was going to say to you, my sweet maid, is, that if ever you should stand in need of a friend, in me you shall be sure to find one, warmly interested in your affairs. I am an old man, old enough to be your father, and can, therefore, have no selfish views; at least, no views that need alarm your virtue."

I could no longer stand the scene: tears started into my eyes, and, with precipitation, I retired into my Lady's closet,

closet, where I threw myself into a chair, and freely indulged my grief. The door was a-jar, so that I could still hear all that passed in the apartment I had quitted.

“ Well said, old square-toes,” cried Sir Richard, laughing. “ I fancy there is not a man present, but would be inclined to make her the same offer; but I believe, if she is inclined to choose a male friend, you will not stand the best chance in the world: I take her to have a better taste. What say you, Lord Edmond?”

“ I say,” replied he, disdainfully, “ that I have been a painful witness to the treatment she has received. It is both rude and inhuman to put

“ art-

“artless innocence to the blush, to
 “wound the suffering heart, already
 “depressed by misfortunes, with sense-
 “less levity : but, I hope, her native
 “good sense will teach her to despise
 “the trifling railers.”

So saying, he left them.

“That sly sentimental fellow,” cried
 Sir Richard, speaking to Mr. Osgood,
 “would distance us both, had we any
 “thoughts of the little rustic : but, for
 “my part, I see nothing so very tempt-
 “ing about her, and only indulged my-
 “self in a little innocent mirth, that I
 “might brighten the roses of her com-
 “plexion, which, at all times, are fifty
 “shades too deep for my taste.”

“Quite

“ Quite a barn-door beauty,” said Miss G—. “ A good deal in the milk-maid style. And then so awkward. Did you ever see such a walking may-pole ? ”

“ Ha ! ha ! ha ! let me die, Madam, if ever I heard a more excellent comparison : you have an infinite deal of wit.”

“ And is not her shape horrid, too,” said Mr. Osgood, satirically :

“ Fine by degrees, and beautifully less ? ”

“ What a contrast between it, and those of our fine Ladies, who seem within a month of their time ! And then, to use the same Poet’s description,

“ Her

“ Her pure and eloquent blood

“ Spoke in her cheek, and so divinely

“ wrought,

“ That one would almost swear her

“ body thought.”

“ How much inferior to the high-

“ polished red of Spanish wool, which

“ not only covers the cheek, but also

“ effectually conceals all the delicate

“ workings of sensibility, that nature

“ displays in the human face divine!

“ A very commodious mask in our de-

“ generate days. Well may the de-

“ praved heart seek to hide its emo-

“ tions.”

“ Thank heaven,” cried Miss G—,

“ your fatirical character is so well

“ known, that your tongue is no scan-

“ dal,

“ dal, though it delights to deal in
“ it.”

“ I hope Miss G—’s conscience
“ not so ill-bred as to make particular
“ application of what was only levelled
“ at the general run of females. You
“ at least, shall escape for the future
“ since I think you contributed towards
“ the relief of the late poor sufferers
“ ers : charity covers a multitude of
“ faults.”

“ Why wretch, have you the assurance
“ ance to think I stand in need of
“ that covering?”

“ It is a commodious cloak, Madam,
“ and may become the best of us.”

“ Come

"Come along, Sir Richard, we have, I think, had a sufficient dose of satire, for one morning."

I heard them go down, on which I resumed my seat and work. Lord Edmond, in spite of myself, took possession of my thoughts. "Ah!" sighed I, how amiable are his sentiments! What a contrast between him and the rest of our gentlemen!—He can be nothing to me—True—but, surely, I may admire his virtues, his engaging manner, his person—Beware of that, Sophia, remember thy father's cautions.—O, if I were his equal!—Let me indulge the pleasing thought;" and I sunk into an agreeable reverie: imagination took the reins. I beheld him

him at my feet, pouring out the effusions of his heart—all obstacles were removed.—Intoxicated with this waking dream, my sentiments burst from my lips. “Dear Lord Edmond,” cried I, “your eloquence has conquered.” My work dropped from my hands. He raised my eyes, beaming with tenderness.—Good heavens, Lady Grace, what was my confusion, my astonishment! Lord Edmond was actually at my feet.—I uttered a loud scream, and fell back in my chair, almost deprived of sense and motion. He folded me in his arms.

“Look at me, Sophia. Think not
 “I will take an ungenerous advantage
 “of the dear enchanting words that
 “have

“ have escaped you. Place some confidence in your adoring Edmond.”

“ Oh, let me die, let me die, my Lord,” covering my face. “ Never, never more can I meet your eyes:”

and I burst into a flood of tears. He tenderly wiped them off with his handkerchief.

“ How your sorrow wounds my late enraptured heart ! Do you then, my love, repent your sweet——”

“ Oh, leave me, Sir, leave me,” interrupted I. “ Never more let me behold you.”

“ Cruel Sophy !”

I raised my eyes.

“ Cruel ! Ah, my Lord, I have, indeed, been cruel to myself ; since, by

“ one

“ one fatal indiscretion, I have, for
“ ever, ruined my peace. But though
“ you have discovered my weakness,
“ yet do not flatter yourself with de-
“ lusive hopes. I am, indeed, but too
“ sensible of your merit, but my virtue
“ is still stronger than my partiality.”

“ And who, O my lovely maid,
“ would injure that angelic virtue?
“ Far be such a thought from thy Ed-
“ mond. No, I would protect it at the
“ hazard of my life.”

“ How then, my Lord, am I to ac-
“ count for your conduct? Why do
“ you talk to me in a strain to which
“ you know I ought not, must not
“ listen? Is it not the height of cruelty
“ in you to seek thus to gain my un-
“ experienced

for experienced heart, when you know
 enough what unsurmountable bars are placed
 between us?—Oh, my father!" ad-
 ded I, clasping my hands, "why has
 fate deprived me of your counsel and
 protection?"

Lord Edmond pressed my hands be-
 tween his.

"Never, while her Edmond lives,
 shall my Sophia want a protector.
 Look upon me as your friend."

"There is too much inequality, even
 for friendship, my Lord: but you
 are my generous benefactor. In that
 light I shall ever regard you with
 gratitude."

I rose to leave him.

Vol. I. F "Stay"

“ Stay one moment longer, dearest
 “ Sophia. That I love you, I call heaven
 “ to witness : but I own myself a
 “ slave to the prejudice of the world.
 “ I dare not act up to my reason : I
 “ sacrifice my happiness to the fear of
 “ senseless ridicule.”

“ Ah, my lord, never will I be the
 “ cause of placing you in a light that
 “ may expose you to it. Be my friend ;
 “ ’tis all I dare aspire to, ’tis all you
 “ ought to bestow.”

“ Sophia, your merit, your charms,
 “ ought to conquer. Suffer me to see,
 “ to converse with you.”

“ No, my lord, that honour might be
 “ fatal to me. Support your dignity,
 “ and leave me to my humble fate.”

“ Leave

"Leave you, Sophia! impossible.
 Your dear image is ever present to
 me. How I am embarrassed! Threat-
 ened with a law-suit, which, if de-
 cided against me, will deprive me of
 the fortune I inherit by my mother,
 I then become wholly dependent on
 an arbitrary father, the continuance
 of whose favour I can hope for on
 no other terms than my marrying Miss
 G—."

"O, my lord, since your interest is
 so nearly concerned, let me entreat
 you to comply. Miss G—is a fine
 woman, she is your equal in birth and
 fortune."

"And would you then, Sophia, wish
 to see me in the arms of another?"

"I wish

“ I wish your happiness, my Lord,” returned I sighing, and casting down my eyes.

“ And you wish me to give my hand to Miss G—?” cried he, pressing mine to his heart.

There is no describing the insinuating grace that accompanies his every action. The softness of his voice, the tenderness of his fine languishing eyes, which, with such sweet persuasion in them, he fixed on mine, had such an effect on me, that I sunk almost fainting into a chair. A tear stole down my cheek. He gently kissed it off.

“ Such freedoms, my Lord, convince me how little you esteem me.”

I hurried from him with all the disdain I could assume.

“ Cruel

"Cruel Sophia!" cried he, folding his arms.

At this moment we heard somebody coming up stairs. He made a precipitate retreat through my Lady's closet. It proved to be Mrs. Bennet. I was in tears.

"What, always weeping, child? Of what have you to complain?"

"Of myself, only," returned I, sighing.

"I shall complain of you, too, if you go on at this rate. Come, you must not be suffered to indulge these melancholy moods. You want amusement: I must endeavour to procure you some."

"Nothing can amuse me."

“ Let us, however, try the experi-
“ ment. To-day there is much compa-
“ ny expected at the castle. Lord Ed-
“ mond’s father for one. A marriage is
“ in agitation. Miss G— is in high
“ spirits. I believe none of this family
“ will regret her loss. This match has
“ long been wished for by both the
“ families. Lord Edmond, however, is
“ not one of the most passionate lovers
“ in the world; but that affair is, now-
“ a-days, out of the question, amongst
“ the great. Miss G— will be satis-
“ fied to become his wife on any terms:
“ and well she may; for he is, to be-
“ sure, one of the most accomplished
“ fine gentlemen in England: a man
“ of morals too, which is still more
“ valuable

“valuable and uncommon in a young
“man of his rank.”

“Has he then given his consent to
“this match?” said I, smothering a
sigh.

“I don’t know; but ’tis for his in-
“terest that he should, and few men
“are blind to that. He is threatened
“with a law-suit, which bids fair to
“deprive him of his paternal fortune;
“and, as that is the case, it will be
“the wisest step he can take.”

But what am I doing, dear Lady
Grace? What a long letter have I
written! Pardon me; this rainy day,
and want of company, left me no
other amusement than scribbling. This

is no very polite apology.—I know not how to extricate myself; and, therefore, without farther ceremony, I bid you

Adieu,

LETTER

LETTER VI.

FOR some days all was mirth and festivity at the castle. Mrs. Bennet endeavoured to engage me in some of the amusements that were going on amongst the tenants and upper servants, but I found no relish either for the company or their diversions. A natural pride, which I condemn'd, but could not conquer, made me avoid any intimacy with people who were, however, every way my equals.

I have before told you that I had a tincture of ambition in my composition. Lord Edmond's flattery had strengthened it. Tho' I durst not indulge a sha-

dow of hope that I should ever be his, yet had the distinction with which he honored me spoiled my relish for the society of those of my own rank: I therefore, as much as possible, avoided all occasions of mixing with them, and continued my retired way of life.

The intended marriage between my Lord and Miss G—— was now buzzed about from every quarter. Your Ladyship may easily judge what were my sensations on the occasion. He was so constantly engaged, that, for some days, I saw him only at a distance from my windows, and then the happy Miss G—— was ever at his elbow,—What a sight for me!

A deep

A deep melancholy took possession of my heart. I spent my sad and lonely hours in sighs and tears, regretting the absence of my affectionate parent, in whose sympathizing bosom I might have reposed my sorrows. Now I had no friend: all the world seemed to have forsaken me. My Lady, indeed, was still kind and indulgent; but the distance between us denied me the privilege of giving free vent to my sentiments in her presence, and Mrs. Bennet was now so fully employed that I had but little of her company, so that I was wholly left to my own sad reflections.

One day, when lost in no very pleasing thoughts, this good woman came hurrying into my apartment. ‘ Quick,

“dress yourself, my dear Sophia,” said
 she. “My Lady desires you will this
 “afternoon make tea for the company.
 “The gentlemen have been so lavish
 “of your praise, during dinner, as the
 “servants told me, that Lord Edmond’s
 “father expressed a great desire to see
 “you. Our Lady did not seem willing
 “to gratify his curiosity, but her lord
 “and master insisted you should this
 “afternoon make your appearance,
 “and you know his will is a law: so
 “set off your charms to the best advan-
 “tage, for I would have them to know
 “beauty is not confined to people of
 “fashion.”

“No, Mrs. Bennet, I shall not alter
 “my dress. What! am I to be made a
 “show

“ show of? Am I to be stuck up for a
 “ parcel of haughty impertinents to
 “ gaze at, perhaps to be turned into ri-
 “ dicule?—O, my cruel fate,” added
 I, bursting into tears, “ to what am I
 “ subjected!”

“ A great hardship, to be sure,” cried
 she, laughing, “ secure as you are of ad-
 “ miration. Come, come, dry those
 “ pretty April eyes of thine, and do
 “ not thus obscure their lustre by that
 “ cloud of sadness. I foresee that you
 “ will make half a hundred conquests;
 “ and who knows, if you manage pro-
 “ perly, but that you may also make
 “ your fortune? I wish I had half your
 “ beauty to go to market with. It is a
 “ very saleable commodity, and many a
 “ one,

“one, with far less, have got rich, ay,
“and noble husbands, too, without ei-
“ther birth or fortune.”

“I despise such mean sentiments,
“such despicable schemes,” returned I,
disdainfully.

“Well, but my dear, proud girl,
“go down, nevertheless; for I had or-
“ders to send you immediately.”

I dried my eyes, and assuming an
air of composure, mixed with some de-
gree of haughtiness (for my pride was
up in arms at what I deemed a mortifi-
cation) with slow and stately steps I
marched into the drawing-room, where
the company, a very brilliant circle, were
assembled. A distaste for the world,
a despair of happiness, and an indiffer-
ence

ence whether I pleased or not, conquered my native timidity, so that I beheld the gay, and as I thought them, insulting crowd, with an eye of unconcern.

“This,” said Lord G—— rising, and taking my hand, “is our pretty “rustic.” (I was piqued at this speech, tho’ uttered in a kind accent.) “What “does your Grace think of her?”

At that moment I glanced my eyes towards Lord Edmond, who was seated by his intended. His emotions were visible in his expressive countenance. He darted at me a look of unutterable fondness. I felt it at the bottom of my heart, from whence it forced a sigh, while a blush overspread my cheek.

“I must

“I must not tell you what I think of her,” said the Duke, “lest, by exciting her vanity, I should throw a shade over the charms that excited my praise.”

“Sit down, my good girl,” cried Lady G——, pointing to where the tea equipage was placed, and obligingly coming up to me. “It was against my will that you were sent for, Sophia. I pity your confusion, but it is all my Lord’s fault: You will, however, soon be at liberty to retire.”

I made the tea. The gentlemen, that they might have an opportunity to put the poor rustic to the blush, by their modish gallantry, officiously insisted on waiting on the ladies. They
said

said a thousand silly things to me on the occasion, to which I scarce vouchsafed an answer. At last Lord Edmond approached, and, with a trembling hand, received a cup from mine.

“Dearest Sophia, what a painful pleasure do I at this moment enjoy! How much have I to say to you!”

“About your intended marriage, I presume, my Lord. I expect, ere long, to have the honor of wishing you joy on its completion.”

“What a killing air of cold indifference, accompanies those mortifying words!—Cruel Sophia! But know you will never have an opportunity to give me joy on so hated an account,
“how-

"however ardently you may wish to
"see me wretched."

"I wish you wretched, my Lord!—

"Ah you little know—"

"If you would save me from despair
"and misery," interrupted he in a low
voice, "meet me this evening, at eight,
"in the grove. I have something of the
"utmost consequence to communicate.
"Consider of my request. I will in a
"few minutes return for your answer."

So saying, he left me, and resumed his
seat.

My eyes involuntarily followed him.
Miss G—— talked to him with an air
of resentment—he seemed inattentive.
At that moment Lord G—— came up
to me.

"By

“ By those pretty, fly glances, Sophia,
 “ I can guess at your thoughts. Let me
 “ screen you from my sister’s observation.
 “ Come, tell me, what said Lord Ed-
 “ mond? Something, I fancy, that gave
 “ you sensible pleasure.”—I blushed.—
 “ Ah, those animated cheeks have saved
 “ your tongue the trouble of revealing
 “ the secret. But, consider, my dear
 “ girl, the man’s engaged, in a fair
 “ way of becoming a husband as well
 “ as myself. Not, indeed, that a foolish
 “ ceremony can preserve the heart from
 “ your powerful attractions: this I know
 “ from experience.”

“ My Lord, this is a language I did
 “ not expect from you.”

“ And

“ By

“And what other could you expect,
“Sophia, conscious as you must be of
“your charms? Do not all men talk to
“you in the same strain?”

“The fine gentlemen do, indeed,
“utter more foolish things than I should
“have imagined they would, consider-
“ing the advantages they have had in
“their education; but from your Lord-
“ship, I expected more wisdom and
“discretion.”

“Did you so, my pretty demure one?
“Well, I will be discreet; but you must
“give me leave to love you, nevertheless.”

“Heaven forbid, my Lord!”

“No, child, heaven bids us, nay
“compels us to it by the seducing
“charms it has lavished on you.”

“I thought,

"I thought, my Lord, you had more
"generosity than to take advantage of
"my humble station thus to insult me."

"Insult you, Sophia! Who but
"yourself would think the homage
"paid to their beauty an insult?"

"To me, my Lord, it must, and
"ever will appear in that light, when
"the homage, as you are pleased to
"call it, comes from a person so much
"my superior in rank—and a married
"man too."

"Yet you could listen to Edmond?"

"He said nothing that could offend
"me, my Lord."

"Saucy little charmer! That's as
"much as to say, I have."

"My

“My Lord, your condescending to
“converse with me is highly improper,
“pardon me, but I wish—”

“Me gone: Is it not so?” interrupted he, smiling. “Well, I will tear myself away for a few moments; but, be sure, if Edmond supplies my place, I will not suffer him quietly to enjoy it long.”

He withdrew, and, as he foresaw, Lord Edmond instantly approached.

“Dearest Sophia,” said he, “you have not had leisure to consider of my proposal; that impertinent Lord G——”

“How can you suppose I would be so indiscreet as to meet you?”

“From

“From your pity, from your goodness, I expect it. Safely may you rely on my honor. By heavens, there is an absolute necessity for it. Do not then make me desperate by a cruel refusal. Here comes Lord G—— again. Say may I hope you will?”

Hardly knowing what I said, I faulted out, “I will.”

He retired, his eyes sparkling with joy.

“You will!” cried Lord G——, “What will you do, Sophia?”

“Why, my Lord,” answered I, “I will not listen to your Lordship, if you resume the conversation with which you before amused yourself at my expence.”

“Sly

“Sly girl—how I admire your wit
“and beauty! You was born to shine in
“the most exalted sphere of life: O
“then let me raise you from your pre-
“sent humble station, and place you in
“one more worthy of your merit.”

“Debase me, you mean,” returned I,
disdainfully. “But trifle no more, my
“Lord; for, however entertaining it may
“be to you, to me it is exceedingly
“mortifying and disagreeable.”

Tea over, I arose to retire.

“Stay,” cried he, “let us be re-
“conciled, before we part. Do you for-
“give me?” and he fixed his eyes ten-
derly on my face.

“I know your Lordship meant no-
“thing but a little harmless raillery.”

“You

"You are deceived, Sophia, I love you from the bottom of my soul."

I was going to answer with indignation, when Lady G——, with anxiety in her countenance, drew near, on which my Lord turned carelessly on his heel, and joined the company.

"Come this way, Sophia," said she, "I want to talk to you."

I followed her into an adjoining apartment.

"Now tell me, truly," cried she, "what has my Lord been saying to you?"

"I overheard part of the conversation: he talked of love, did he not?"

"Alas! Madam, all the fine gentlemen take a cruel pleasure in putting me to the blush. Lord G——

VOL. I.

G

"thought

“thought proper to rally me as well as
“the rest.”

“Ah, Sophia, his looks but ill cor-
“respond with raillery. He was, when
“I married him, a man of professed
“gallantry. Why had I the vanity to
“hope I could reclaim him? My fatal
“passion was too powerful for my rea-
“son. I know—I believe you strictly
“virtuous, Sophia: But I ought not to
“have thrown so powerful a temptation
“in his way. Yet fain would I continue
“you under my protection.”

“Dear Madam,” said I, weeping
“let me not give you a moment’s pain
“Send me to my father. Never shall
“I forget your goodness, nor the fa-
“vours I have already received.”

“I grieve

"I grieve to part with you, Sophia," said she, embracing me; "yet I fear there will be a necessity for it. I have not time at present to consider on what is proper to be done. I need not caution you as much as possible to avoid my Lord."

I kissed her hand on my knees, and assured her she might safely rely on my discretion. I then retired to her dressing-room, and there reflected on the rash promise I had made to Lord Edmond. The time drew near. After a long dispute betwixt my head and my heart, love and curiosity got the victory. I stole down by the back stairs, and without observation reached the grove. Lord

Edmond was already there. He approached with rapture.

“Dear, amiable Sophia, how shall I express my gratitude for this sweet condescension?”

“No compliments, my Lord: quick, tell me the important affair you have to communicate. I blush at my own imprudence in meeting you, and perhaps you will despise me for my easy compliance. But, my Lord,” added I sighing, “you said you should be unhappy if I refused. Gratitude forbids that I should give a moment’s pain to the person who has loaded both my father and me with such obligations; tell me then, my Lord, what do you expect of me?”

“Com-

“Compassion, dearest Sophia,” pressing my hand to his lips; “compassion, as a balm to heal my afflicted heart. My father endeavours to precipitate me into a hated marriage. In vain I remonstrate: the forfeiture of his friendship is the consequence of my refusal. He tells me he has now reason to dread the issue of my law-suit. If I lose that and his favour I am inevitably ruined.”

“Then, my Lord,” cried I, “on my knees let me entreat you to conquer your repugnance to the alliance: I conjure you, no longer oppose his inclinations.”

“I must and ever will in this point,” returned he. “Ah! Sophia, your

“heart is a stranger to love, or you
“would better know its unconquerable
“power. It has already overcome my
“prejudices, strong as they were: I
“despise the world and its ridicule. And
“if you, my amiable girl, will accept
“of my hand, notwithstanding my im-
“pending misfortunes, if you, my
“love, will consent to share my fate, I
“will set every ill that can befall me at
“defiance.”

“O, my Lord,” cried I, pene-
trated with gratitude, “you must not,
“shall not thus outdo me in generosity.
“Heavens! shall I, honored as I am
“by your partiality, shall I be the fa-
“tal cause of your ruin? O, no—I ne-
“ver, never will consent—”

“To

“To my happiness,” interrupted he, with impatience. “’Tis well, Sophia, then I will suffer alone.”

He folded his arms, and walked from me deeply sighing.

“My Lord—”

“What would my cruel angel?”

“Miss G——”

“Name her not: I would not marry her had she the wealth of the Indies.”

“Alas, my Lord, consider the fatal consequence of your refusal.”

“I shall lose my fortune, and therefore, my Sophia, deems me unworthy her acceptance.”

“O, my Lord, what a thought! Would to heaven you had never been allied to wealth and titles, but that

“ your lot were humble as my own;
“ how joyfully would I then—” I paused and blushed. He pressed me to his bosom.

“ Dear Sophia, love levels all distinctions. Consent then to bless me
“ with your hand. Let me privately
“ make you mine. I will then endeavour
“ to gain time, and if my father should
“ still insist on my immediate compliance,
“ my prior engagement with you will be
“ my excuse for refusing my consent.”

“ So indiscreet a cause will but aggravate the fault, my Lord. After a
“ step like that you cannot hope for the
“ continuance of his favour.”

“ Your charms, your merit will plead
“ for me. He greatly admires my Sophia.”

“ Ah,

“ Ah, my Lord, but he would detest
 “ me, had I the presumption to aspire to
 “ the honor you indiscreetly offer me.”

Lord Edmond on his knees continued
 his too eloquent intercessions. Hardly
 could my weak enamoured heart resist
 his powerful solicitations. I had, how-
 ever, so much command of myself as to
 refuse taking any resolution, till I had
 consulted my father. To this he cheer-
 fully agreed, and promised to write to
 him immediately.

How rapidly do the moments wing
 their flight when in company with those
 we love! I know not when we should
 have thought of separating, had we not
 been alarmed with a rustling among the
 trees. I started, and in a trembling

voice exclaimed, "O Heavens! we are
" betrayed."

" Fear nothing," cried Mr. Osgood,
hastily advancing: " chance, not imper-
" tinent curiosity, conducted me to this
" retreat. I am too much the friend of
" both to betray the secret which accident
" has revealed to me. Lay aside that
" menacing air, my Lord;" (for he had
put his hand to his sword) " I admire
" your generosity. The amiable Sophia
" is worthy of a monarch's love. She
" justly merits the honor you would
" confer on her. If I can be of any ser-
" vice in the affair, command me to the
" utmost of my power."

My Lord took his hand.

" From

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“ From my knowledge of your character, I have no reason to doubt your sincerity. Chance has made you my confident: with gratitude I accept your offered friendship. Your prudent advice may be of service to me, as well as your assistance.”

“ Depend upon both, my Lord.— My first advice is, that Sophia may return to the castle. Miss G—— is on the watch. Should your evil genius lead her to this place, her malice, her jealousy will stop at nothing to effect your charmer’s ruin. Go then, my child,” continued he, “ and leave my Lord and me to settle our future plan of operations.”

My Lord pressed me to his heart.

“ In the presence of heaven, and this
“ our worthy friend, I swear to live
“ only for my Sophia ; and no power
“ on earth shall prevail on me to give
“ my hand to any one but her, who
“ is, and ever shall be, sole mistress of
“ my heart.”

He tenderly kissed off a tear of grateful sensibility that stole down my cheek.

“ I must,” said Mr. Osgood, taking my hand, “ interrupt your present
“ felicity, that I may ensure its continuance.” So saying, he led me towards the house, desiring Lord Edmond to wait his return.

I hurried to my apartment, agitated with a thousand hopes and fears. For

some

some time I gave myself up to the dear delightful thought of my being so tenderly loved by the only man I wished to please ; but too soon a train of melancholy ideas usurped their place. I saw all the imprudence of our union, the troubles in which it would involve my generous lover, the reproaches of his family, the loss of his fortune. I, too, should, by them, be hated and despised. Perhaps even the man I adored, would, after the first transports of his passion were abated, reproach me as the cause of his ruin. I shuddered at the bare idea : my resolution failed. " Thank heaven," said I, " the fatal " vow has not yet passed my lips. Ah, " no, I cannot, dare not, must not " be

“ be his.— But must he then wed my
“ rival? How can I support that kil-
“ ling thought? Must I be debarred
“ even the privilege of loving him?
“ —O, my father, why are you not here?
“ Why am I deprived of your counsel
“ and protection?”

In the midst of these tormenting reflections, I received orders to attend my Lady. She was alone, and in tears.

“ Come here, Sophia,” said she, holding out her hand; “ Come, my
“ good girl, and help to console me for
“ the misery of which you have been
“ the innocent cause.”

I threw myself at her feet, pressing her hand between mine.

“ I have

“ I have been very indiscreet,” continued she, sighing. “ I ventured to condemn my Lord’s conduct, in regard to you. I know not what I said ; but he flew into a rage, swore I should not controul him in his pleasures. He would not be accountable to any one for his conduct, much less to a wife ; and with contempt he spoke it. Of what have you to complain, Madam ? ” continued he. Are you not mistress of my fortune ? Are you not at liberty to follow your inclinations ? Do not I treat you with respect ; with politeness ? — Ah, my Lord, but what has that to do with love ? It is that I aspire to, it is that I have studied to deserve. — Love ! ridiculous. Shew me a husband
 “ who

“ who behaves with more complaisance to
“ his wife, than I do to you. But if you
“ grow jealous, Madam, if you become
“ a spy upon my actions, why then I
“ cannot answer for the consequence ;
“ for, by heaven, I again repeat it, I will
“ not be controuled: Marriage shall not
“ make a slave of me. I seek not to de-
“ prive you of any reasonable liberty ;
“ and, be assured, I will, likewise, be my
“ own master.—Nor would I, my Lord,
“ deprive you (were it in my power) of
“ any reasonable liberty : but Sophia is
“ under my protection, nor must I tamely
“ see—What have you seen? interrupted
“ he, passionately ; you saw me trifling
“ with the girl, perhaps. I like her,
“ what then ? Must I ask your leave ?

“ Must

" Must I see only with your eyes? Must
 " I be blind to the charms of all wo-
 " men, except yourself?—O pardon me,
 " my Lord, cried I, weeping, it was
 " more for her sake, than my own, that
 " I ventured to remonstrate; for do I
 " not know your fatal power of pleasing?
 " And when I consider her ignorance of
 " the world, her inexperience, I tremble
 " for her safety.—Take care of your
 " own virtue, Madam—Sneeringly he
 " spoke—This is not an age for works of
 " supererogation. Guard your own hon r,
 " and leave your neighbours to shift for
 " themselves. — This is the first dispute
 " we have had, my Lord—All in good
 " time, Madam, interrupted he, with a
 " fatirical smile. These things want but
 " a be-

“ a beginning.—I hope it will be the last,
“ my Lord. The cause of this shall be
“ removed. I shall send her to her fa-
“ ther : not from jealousy—O not from
“ jealousy, to be sure. But take care,
“ Madam, ’tis my will and pleasure, that
“ she should remain where she is, and
“ let me see who shall dispute my or-
“ ders. By heaven, a jealous wife is the
“ d***l.—He was going, I cast myself at
“ his feet, bathed in tears, and catching
“ hold of his coat, said, O, my lord,
“ leave me not in displeasure. Pardon
“ my indiscretion. Never more will I of-
“ fend you in this way.—He raised me
“ in his arms.—Why, Caroline, said he,
“ when you know my hasty temper, would
“ you exasperate me by your injurious sus-
“ pitions ?

"picious?—Then, with a gay air, he
"repeated,

"Be to my faults a little blind,

"Be to my virtues ever kind,

"Let all my ways be unconfined,

"and then you shall ever hold the first

"place in my esteem, and, as far as a

"poor erring mortal can command his

"affection, in my heart also. But do

"not let Sophia suffer for my fault.

"Deprive her not of your protection :

"she is worthy of your favour : and if

"you do not put roguish thoughts into

"my head, by your well-meant, but

"imprudent cautions, she shall remain

"so for me. Keep her out of Lord

"Edmond's way ; for, if I am not

"mis-

"mistaken, there lies her greatest danger."

"Is this true?" continued her Ladyship, fixing her penetrating eyes on my face.

"Ah, Madam," cried I, covering my face with my handkerchief to hide my blushes, "send me to my father: let me return to my peaceful solitude."

"I dare not send you, Sophia; but you know you are not my prisoner, your own prudence must direct you what is proper to be done."

"I understand you, my dear Lady," pressing her hand to my lips.

She arose, and taking a little casket out of her cabinet, "This, Sophia," said she, putting it into my hand, and
embrac-

embracing me, "will, should we be
"obliged to part, remind you of her
"who will ever continue to be your
"friend."

I could not answer her for my tears.

"Go, my good girl," continued she,
"and heaven bless you."

I hardly know how I got to my
apartment, so much was I affected
with her goodness.—Mrs. Bennet was
there.

"What, always rain!" cried she;
"never one ray of sun-shine to brighten
"that pretty face of thine?"

"O, dear Mrs. Bennet, I am very
"unfortunate."

"And pray what imaginary ills have
"you to complain of?"

"Ah,

“ Ah, would to heaven they were
“ only imaginary ! ”

“ My poor child,” pressing me to
her bosom, “ why will you not repose
“ some confidence in me ? Be assured,
“ you have not a more sincere friend
“ in the house. I loved you from the
“ moment I beheld you. You are con-
“ tinually in tears, yet you never tell
“ me the cause. Come, it will ease your
“ heart to communicate your grief.”

Worthy as she appeared, I durst not
make her my confident. I ventured,
however, to tell her that I should, the
next day, leave the castle. She was
amazed. I conjured her to keep the se-
cret : this she faithfully promised, and
was so discreet as not to enquire into
the

the cause of this sudden resolution. She assisted me in packing up my cloaths, for I was determined to set off early in the morning.—Yet how could I resolve to go without seeing Lord Edmond?—I might write, but who would deliver my letter? I fell into a profound reverie. Mrs. Bennet left me, but returned in a few minutes.

“Here now is an affair I should never have dreamt of,” said she, as she entered; “but, though you have not placed all the confidence in me that I deserve, be assured I will not betray your secret.”

“What secret?” cried I, with surprise.

“Only

“Only that Lord Edmond loves you,” returned she, “and that I have brought a letter from him;” presenting it to me. I opened it with trembling impatience: it was as follows;

“I have dispatched a letter to my Sophia’s father: on the reception it meets with, depends my happiness. Surely he will be propitious to my suit. O Sophia, I cannot live without you. You must, you shall be mine, though new obstacles now oppose the ardently-wished-for union. —We are betrayed, my beloved creature. I have not time to tell you the particulars. Miss G—’s maid was in the fatal grove, accompanied by my valet. They over-heard part of our
“con-

“ conversation. This the faithful fellow
“ voluntarily confessed to me, that I
“ might take proper measures to pre-
“ vent the consequence of his compa-
“ nion’s communicating, as he was sure
“ she would, the secret of our inter-
“ view to her Lady. By this time, I
“ make no doubt, she is acquainted
“ with every particular. You are no
“ longer, my sweet girl, safe at the
“ castle. Our enemies will stop at no-
“ thing to deprive me of you. No
“ time is to be lost. Fly then, my
“ love, fly to the protection of your
“ father. For some time they will not
“ suspect your flight. I have gained
“ the worthy Mrs. Bennet to our in-
“ terest. A pretended indisposition she

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“ will

“ will make use of as an excuse for
“ your not leaving your room. I wait
“ at the end of the avenue, with a
“ chaise, to convey you to your father.
“ She will conduct you to me. I shall
“ return, the moment I have delivered
“ up my precious charge, that you may
“ have no scruple of trusting yourself
“ to the protection of your adoring
“ Edmond. Mr. Osgood is to accom-
“ pany us : 'tis his chaise. My valet
“ is to be our postilion. None of the
“ servants are entrusted : we need not
“ then fear a discovery. Come then
“ my angel, I impatiently wait for all
“ my soul holds dear. Adieu.”

Kind Mrs. Bennet put on my hat and
cloak while I was reading this alarming
billet. . . . “ Come

“Come, child, ’tis late, Lord Edmond will be out of patience; let me be your guide.” She took hold of my arm. I could scarce support myself, so violent were my emotions. Without meeting any obstacles, we reached the place of appointment. Mrs. Bennet tenderly embraced me.

“Adieu, my dear child,” said she, “all happiness attend you.”

“You may,” said I, “inform my Lady of my flight; she expects it: but O, my good friend, tell her not the cause.”

“Doubt not my discretion.”

Lord Edmond lifted me into the chaise and placed me on his knee. I struggled, but pressing me still closer to his breast,

he softly whispered, "Cruel Sophia!
"When we are so soon to part, can you
"deny me this small consolation?"

Who could resist the insinuating voice of love? Besides, he deserved some indulgence for having so prudently prevailed on Mr. Osgood to accompany us. I was harrassed and fatigued with the various emotions I had that day experienced. It was now near one in the morning. The motion of the carriage, and the darkness, quite overpowered me: my head sunk on the bosom of my lover, and for some time a gentle slumber closed my eye-lids. A jolt of the carriage waked me. I started.

"Heavens! where am I?"

"In

“In the arms of your Edmond,”
 whispered my Lord, pressing his lips
 softly to my cheek; “these encircling
 “arms that shall ever protect you from
 “danger. Compose yourself, my love,
 “and sink again to rest on this faithful
 “bosom. Our worthy companion has
 “set you the example.”

“My Lord, I am troublesome, let me
 “sit between you.”

“Not for worlds,” whispered he,
 “would I forego my lovely burthen;”
 and he strained me still nearer to his
 beating heart. “O, Sophia, what de-
 “lightful sensations have I this night
 “experienced, while I felt your sweet
 “breath on my cheek, while I stole a
 “thousand tender kisses! But judge of

“ my transports when I heard you
“ gently sigh forth the name of your
“ Edmond. Dream again, my lovely
“ girl,” added he, softly, “ and let me
“ be the subject of your dreams.”

“ I have been thinking—” said Mr.
Osgood.

“ You have been thinking!” inter-
rupted Lord Edmond, smiling; “ I
“ thought you had been sleeping.”

“ No matter which,” returned Mr.
Osgood, “ since you find, my Lord,
“ that, whether sleeping or waking,
“ your affairs employ my attention. But
“ what I was going to say, is, that Sophia
“ will not be safe at her father’s; on the
“ contrary, it will be the first place they
“ will search for her.”

“ True,

"True, my friend: but I hope, before to-morrow night, it will be out of their power to tear her from me."

"How, my Lord?" cried I.

"By an indissoluble union, my Sophia. There is no time to be lost. I have a house at no great distance from your father's.—My chaplain is there."

"O heavens, my Lord, so very soon? Impossible!"

"And why impossible? Cruel Sophia! Would you then wish me to lose you for ever?"

"Ah Sir, consider the consequence. Can I consent to ruin the man I so highly esteem?"

H 4

"How

“How cold, how unimpassioned is
“that expression!”

“What can I say, my Lord? Your
“interest is dearer to me than my own.”

“Interest! What is interest when op-
“posed to happiness? Nothing. But
“your indifference can oppose my fel-
“city. Insensible girl!”

I wept. He kissed off my tears.

“Do not distress me by your scrupu-
“lous delicacy. Dearest Sophia, consent
“to be mine, and my whole life shall
“be employed to convince you how
“grateful I am for the inestimable gift.”

“Let me consult my father. Dear
“Lord Edmond, sensible as I am of
“the honor, I dare not accept it with-
“out his approbation.”

The

The chaise stopped at his cottage. Nothing could equal the transports of our meeting. When these were a little abated, our affairs were briefly discussed. He used every argument his wisdom could suggest to dissuade Lord Edmond from a step so every way imprudent, but in vain; he continued fixed in his purpose. At last, overcome by his eloquent intreaties, he gave a reluctant consent that we should be privately married at his Lordship's seat in the neighbourhood. Mr. Osgood and my father alone were to be present at the ceremony: after which, Lord Edmond and his friend were to return to the castle, and my father and I instantly to set off for London, where we were to keep our-

selves concealed, till his Lordship, on some pretence, could join us. With infinite reluctance did this amiable lover tear himself from me, tho' for so short a time, but the friendly Mr. Osgood forced him away. You may better imagine than I can describe the manner in which I passed the rest of the night. My father obliged me to retire to rest. "Sophia," said he, pressing me to his breast, "tomorrow will be the most important day of your life. May your marriage be more fortunate than that of your ill-fated father. Lord Edmond is every way worthy of you; and you, my child, will not, I trust, disgrace his choice. But, alas, into what troubles is he going to plunge himself, governed

“verned as he is by an indiscreet passion
 “which stifles the voice of reason! His
 “fortune is precarious, and the favour of
 “his father unavoidably forfeited, should
 “he discover your union.—Ah, why
 “did I consent?”

“O, my father, who could refuse
 “Lord Edmond? I seek not to be pub-
 “lickly acknowledged his wife: no,
 “’tis sufficient to ensure my felicity to
 “know that I am married to him: it may
 “long be concealed from the world.”

“But how, my child, will he be
 “able to disentangle himself from his
 “engagement with Miss G——, stre-
 “nuously as the Duke insists on the
 “match? And will not our slight cause
 “suspicious?”

H 6

“No,

“No, Lady G——, at least, will
“attribute it to another cause. She is
“discreet.”

I then related the conversation that
had passed between us, on the subject
of her Lord's imprudent behaviour.

“I have a thousand fears, my child,
“and know not on what to determine.
“Heaven must dispose of us as it sees fit.
“Should Lord Edmond lose his cause—”

“Ah, my dear Sir, I will joyfully
“share his fate in wealth or poverty. He
“is in the army, his rank must ensure
“his promotion. Besides, is he not at
“any rate entitled to a younger brother's
“fortune?”

“No, my child, he at present enjoys
“that of his mother, which they now
“seek

"seek to deprive him of. I have not,
 "indeed, heard the particulars of the
 "affair, but, by the few circumstances
 "that have come to my knowledge, I
 "fear his future prospects are very pre-
 "carious. The pretended heir may, in-
 "deed, prove an impostor, who, I am
 "told, has not yet appeared to put in
 "his claim. But as no expence nor
 "pains will be spared by those who
 "espouse his cause to find him out, I
 "make no doubt but they will, ere long,
 "be able to produce him."

"Alas, Sir, what then would you
 "have me do? I love Lord Edmond,
 "but I would die—"

"No more, my Sophia, you are har-
 "rassed with fatigue, and stand in need

" of

“of rest. My word is past. Lord Edmond is master of your fate. Leave me, that I may offer up my prayers for your mutual felicity. Such honor as he has manifested, and such virtue as you possess, cannot fail of the protection of the Almighty. And if he is for you, who shall be against you?”

I threw myself on my bed, but my various emotions deprived me of rest. The pleasure I felt at the thoughts of being united to the man I adored, was lost in the fatal consequences that might attend that union.

I arose in the morning without having once closed my eyes. Tears involuntarily stole down my cheeks. I felt a load at my heart which I in vain attempted

to

to shake off. All my father's kind endeavours could not rouse me from my melancholy dejection. Yet this was to be my bridal day. I was going to receive the vows of my beloved Edmond: Could I form a wish of more exquisite felicity? How anxiously did I wait for his appearance! His dear presence would restore my peace, and his soothing tenderness calm my agitated mind. At length I heard the noise of a carriage. "O he is come!" cried I, "the Lord of my heart!" The transport was too violent; I sunk into a chair almost deprived of sense and motion.

My father went to receive him, but judge, Lady Grace, of my astonishment, when, instead of my lover, I saw him
return

return with Mrs. Ainsley, Miss G——'s maid! At this sight I uttered a loud shriek, and gave myself up for lost. She was in earnest conversation with my father.

“No harm is intended, Sir. My orders are, to reconduct your daughter to the castle, that she may give some reason for her extraordinary flight.”

“Then, Madam, you must give me leave to attend her.”

“No, Sir, my instructions were only to fetch your daughter. Lady G—— has had much uneasiness on her account. My Lord insists it must have been her ill treatment that compelled her to take such a step. If she has any gratitude she will hasten to vindicate
“her

"her Lady from this unjust accusation.

"The whole house was in confusion

"when her flight was discovered. I

"should, indeed, except Lord Edmond

"and the Duke, who have this whole

"morning been shut up with a person

"who has brought them some import-

"ant intelligence concerning the law-

"suit. But, come, Sophia, Miss G——

"will be angry at my stay."

"Ah," thought I, "I can now ac-

"count for my lover's absence. Cruel

"fate, to be thus deprived of his pre-

"sence and protection! What will be-

"come of me? All my gaudy visions of

"happiness are fled for ever. Yet, I

"hope, our secret is not discovered."

My

My father re-urged his request to accompany me.

" 'Tis contrary to my orders," said the woman.

" O then, my father," cried I, clasping my arms about him, " I will not go without you, they have no right to force me hence."

" The girl's a fool," said Mrs. Ainsley. " Who wants to force you? " If you are not conscious of guilt, why should you be afraid to face your Lady?"

" Go, my child," said my father. " Secure in conscious innocence, go, and clear up your conduct. I will follow you on foot, since this obstinate woman will not allow me a place in
" the

“the carriage. It is not very far, I shall
 “soon be with you, and then, my
 “Sophia, we will part no more. Never
 “again will I trust my child to the
 “mercy of strangers: no, I am the
 “fittest person to be your guardian and
 “protector.”

“I submit to my fate,” cried I,
 bursting into tears, and flinging myself
 into his arms; “but I feel, also, my fa-
 “ther, I feel we part never to meet
 “again.”

The ill-natured Mrs. Ainsley burst
 into a loud laugh.

“A pretty tragical scene this,” said
 she; “and for what, I wonder? But
 “come, my patience is quite exhausted.
 “How much longer am I to wait?”

My

My father led me to the chaise.

“Before night,” said he, “I will
“again, embrace my dear Sophia.”

I answered only with my sighs and
tears.

Away we drove quick as lightning.
There were four horses to the carriage,
which I thought needless for so short a
journey. This thought just glanced across
my mind. Alas! I had matters of far
more importance to employ my mind.

For some miles, neither my compa-
nion nor I opened our lips. At last, “I
“have all this time been thinking,”
said she, “how cleverly I have managed
“this affair. Poor Sophia! Ha! ha!
“ha! And it was indulging itself in a
“fool’s paradise, going to be a Lady,

“I’ll

" I'll warrant ye ! But pride will have
" a fall."

" Dear Mrs. Ainsley, how cruel are
" these taunts. What have I done to
" make you my enemy ? "

" Your enemy ! no, Sophia, I have
" proved myself your friend : Lord Ed-
" mond would soon have repented his
" imprudence. Light love as lightly
" goes. All the blame would have fallen
" on you ; even *he* would have reproach-
" ed you as the cause of his ruin."

" I the cause of Lord Edmond's ruin ?
" Heaven forbid ! "

" What else could have been the con-
" sequence of his intended marriage ?

" This reserve to me, Sophia, will an-
" swer no manner of purpose : I know

" your

“ your affairs even better than you do
 “ yourself.”

“ Ah !” exclaimed I, weeping, “ who
 “ then has betrayed us ? What will be-
 “ come of me ? Let me return to my
 “ father. Do not cruelly expose me to
 “ the rage of my haughty rival. I can-
 “ not go to the castle.”

“ You shall not, child : our route lies
 “ quite a different way.”

“ O heavens ! where then are you
 “ carrying me to ? Stop, postillion :”
 putting my head out at the window,
 and screaming with all my force. She
 only laughed at my terrors.

“ Do not waste your breath, Sophia :
 “ the man has his orders. Your resist-
 “ ance, your entreaties will be fruitless.

“ Compose

“ Compose yourself, therefore, and, with
 “ a good grace, submit to your fate.
 “ No harm is intended you : I am only
 “ carrying you out of the way to pre-
 “ vent mischief. I am deputed your
 “ *guardianess*. You will want for no-
 “ thing but liberty, and even that will
 “ be restored to you as soon as they
 “ have brought Lord Edmond to his
 “ sober senses. When he resigns his
 “ freedom to Miss G—, you will be
 “ restored to yours : till then, child, I
 “ am to keep you out of his way. Now
 “ be easy, for you know the whole my-
 “ stery of our journey.”

“ Ah, my adored Edmond !” sighed
 I, shedding a flood of tears, “ are we
 “ then separated for ever?—And where,”
 said

said I, at last, a little recovered from my grief and astonishment, “are you going to convey your unhappy prisoner?”

“To a very agreeable place, child: a city of which all females are said to be fond: London, the centre of gaiety and pleasure. It is true, we shall not, for some time, partake in its amusements; but the noise and bustle alone will be an agreeable change, after the stupid still life of the country. O we shall be vastly happy!”

I gave but little attention to her impertinence, as my heart was ready to burst with anguish. I was torn from all I held dear on earth, from an affection-

ate

ate father and a lover whom I adored, a lover to whom I, that fatal day, hoped to have been united for ever. Dreadful change! I almost sunk under the burthen of my afflictions.

My pitiless companion turned all my sorrows into ridicule. At length she said, "You are miserably-dull company, "Sophia: I have all the conversation to "myself. Now, were I you, I should "have a violent curiosity to know how "we discovered your intended match, "and how we managed to keep Lord "Edmond out of the way till we got "his little syren into our power. Come, "I know you are dying to learn all these "particulars; and, as I am of a charitable disposition, I will relate them, tho'

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"you

“ you are too proud to ask the favour.

“ No wonder you are proud, child, so

“ near as you thought yourself to be-

“ coming a Lady. Alas, poor Sophia,

“ to fall from such a height, and again

“ to dwindle into an humble Abigail!

“ But we Abigails are no such despica-

“ ble beings: if we have wit, we may

“ easily become the mistress of our mis-

“ tresses. But you, I think, have no

“ great talents in that way; and what is

“ a little baby-faced beauty without it?

“ Had I been in your place, all their arts

“ should not have robbed me of my

“ lover. No, I would have played my

“ cards too cunningly for that: But all

“ have their different gifts. My head is

“ turned for stratagem.—But come, to

“ amuse

"amuse you as well as myself, I'll tell
 "you how we managed our plot. It
 "was exceedingly pleasant. You met
 "Lord Edmond in the grove—I have
 "admirers as well as you, tho' perhaps
 "neither so young nor so handsome; but
 "that's neither here nor there—many
 "men, many minds. So, while my Lord
 "was entertaining you, his gentleman
 "(in my opinion, as is often the case,
 "far the prettiest fellow of the two) was
 "entertaining your humble servant.
 "My curiosity was stronger than my
 "love: I paid less attention to the ad-
 "dresses of my admirer than to your
 "conversation. I heard his romantic
 "Lordship make you an offer of his
 "hand. Mercy on us! I could hardly

“ credit my senses; for, as I said before,
“ what on earth could tempt him to be
“ such a fool? Marriage, indeed! Why
“ he might have had your betters on far
“ easier terms. So Mr. John begged I
“ would not mention what had passed
“ between you. A likely story! I had as
“ much regard for my mistress as he had
“ for his Lord: So away flew I, open-
“ mouth’d, to relate to her the curious
“ adventure. I thought she would have
“ expired with rage.—What, to be ri-
“ valed by such a low-born creature!
“ A little, insignificant rustic! O there
“ was no supporting the mortifying
“ thought. What was to be done? She
“ would instantly inform the Duke.—
“ No, Madam; if I might advise, your
“ pur-

"purpose would be much better an-
 "swered by stratagem than force.—
 "How, how, dear Ainsley? I know
 "you have a fertile invention, and wit
 "at will.—Suppose I contrive to carry
 "her out of his way? — Impossible,
 "that's a ridiculous scheme.—Neither
 "ridiculous nor impracticable. Let me
 "alone to manage it.—Dear Ainsley
 "you will entitle yourself to my ever-
 "lasting gratitude. But by what method
 "can you effect your design?—My plan
 "is not yet settled. There is, however,
 "no time to lose. My Lord is in vio-
 "lent haste to ruin himself: my first
 "business, therefore, must be to watch
 "her motions; for as I suspect John
 "will inform his master that I have dis-

“ covered their secret, they will, it is
“ probable, this very night fall on some
“ method to secure her against the im-
“ pending storm, since they cannot
“ doubt my having informed you of the
“ affair.—Fly then, my dear Ainsley,
“ conceal yourself in her room, do not
“ lose sight of her a moment, as you va-
“ lue my favour. Away I tripped, and
“ hid myself in your closet. You was
“ summoned to attend your Lady. I
“ followed, and, concealing myself be-
“ hind a screen, heard all that passed.
“ Before you parted, I again hurried
“ back to my first hiding-place; there
“ I also heard what passed between you
“ and that sly old hypocrite Mrs. Bennet.
“ I watched you till you reached the
“ carriage;

“carriage; I then flew to communicate
 “what had happened to my Lady.—
 “Bungler, cried she, in a rage, what
 “have you done? Why did you suffer
 “her to escape? Are they not gone off
 “together? Ah, Lord Edmond is lost
 “to me for ever!—Dear Madam, com-
 “pose yourself, they are only gone to
 “her father’s; she will be more in our
 “power than when at the castle, and
 “they will never think of being married
 “at this time of night.—How do you
 “know what they will think of? O I
 “could kill both myself and you for
 “vexation!—Suppose you send in pur-
 “suit after them?—It is too late. If
 “they are not gone to her father’s, they
 “will be out of our reach before it is

“ possible to overtake them.—I am po-
“ sitive they are gone there, Madam,
“ and, as it was a sudden thought, they
“ cannot have made the necessary prepa-
“ rations for the marriage. To-morrow
“ morning will be the soonest they can
“ effect their purpose, and before that
“ you may forbid the banns.—Let us sit
“ up, however, and see whether my
“ Lord returns. Do you, Ainsley, post
“ yourself in a convenient place to watch
“ their coming. No doubt it will be by
“ the private stair-case that leads to his
“ apartment. Go, and take your station.
“ Away I went. As we foresaw, in
“ about two hours, my Lord and Mr.
“ Osgood came stealing in, in the dark,
“ and brushed by me, as I stood behind
“ the

" the door. I heard his Lordship say in
 " a low voice, O my friend, how impa-
 " tiently do I long for to-morrow! Then
 " will you see me the happiest of men,
 " possessed of all my soul holds dear.
 " Do not fail to meet me at the appoint-
 " ed place. Eleven o'clock is the hour.
 " To go too early might create suspici-
 " ons.—And eleven o'clock, thought I,
 " laughing, will be as much too late
 " for your purpose.—Fraught with this
 " intelligence, I ran to communicate it
 " to my Lady.—Well, now, Ainsley,
 " what is next to be done? His father
 " shall be informed of the whole affair.—
 " O, Madam, even that I fear will not
 " prevent the match. You know he is
 " of age, the discovery can only deprive

“ him of his favour, and I believe, to
“ such a desperate degree is he in love,
“ that he would forfeit any thing rather
“ than his rustic. The most effectual me-
“ thod to prevent it would be to get
“ her into our power, and there, you
“ know, we might keep her as long as
“ we found it convenient. Absence, and
“ despair of finding her, may cool his
“ passion, and your charms, in the mean
“ time, may set all things to rights
“ again.—But he will suspect me as the
“ person who has concealed her, and that
“ will encrease his aversion: that we
“ must endeavour to prevent. Yet no
“ matter whether or not; my revenge,
“ if not my love, shall at least be grati-
“ fied. But where, supposing we can
“ get

“ get her into our power, will you carry
 “ her?—To London, Madam, as the
 “ place least liable to be discovered.—
 “ To this she agreed.—Next morning,
 “ by day-break, a hired post-chaise was
 “ ready to conduct me to your cottage.
 “ —A person arrived at the castle with
 “ important intelligence from my Lord’s
 “ lawyer.—The Duke and he were shut
 “ up in his study. This, and Miss G—’s
 “ watchful care, would put an effectual
 “ stop to my Lord’s intended expedition;
 “ at least at the hour appointed. -In the
 “ mean time, having received her in-
 “ structions, I set off on mine.—You
 “ know the rest, and how successfully I
 “ have managed my scheme.—O let me
 “ alone for a plot. Not a cleverer head

“ in England than mine for a business of
“ this nature.—And now, child, shake
“ off your reserve. You see I deal freely
“ and above-board with you. You ought
“ to thank me for saving you from a
“ step so every way imprudent and ridi-
“ culous.”

“ And do you think, Madam,” said
I, with spirited indignation, “ that I
“ will tamely submit to be your pri-
“ soner?”

“ How will you help yourself, child?”

“ I will apply to the first person I meet
“ for protection. Do you think in so
“ large a place as London I shall not
“ find some charitable people who will
“ deliver me from your power?”

“ Why

“ Why no, really, child, I do not
 “ think you will. And what would be-
 “ come of you if you could, without
 “ friends, without money? Ah, ’tis a
 “ sign you know little of the world.
 “ People will not trouble their heads
 “ about either you or your affairs, unless
 “ well paid for their pains. Besides, I
 “ shall not trust you out of my sight.”

“ But I have a tongue, Madam, and
 “ in the very first town we come to I
 “ will proclaim my wrongs. No such
 “ iniquitous plots as you are engaged in
 “ are permitted in this land of liberty.”

“ Ah, upon my word, child, you are
 “ more knowing than I imagined; but
 “ there is such a thing as stopping that
 “ pretty mouth of thine. I believe I am
 “ the

“ the strongest of the two, so I would
“ advise you not to be refractory, lest I
“ should be tempted to use harsher me-
“ thods. Of this be assured, you shall
“ never be Lord Edmond’s; as for any
“ thing else you shall have no reason to
“ complain. You shall live at your ease,
“ and want for nothing; for Miss G——
“ is generous as a princess. Surely, a
“ few weeks of confinement, to one of
“ your pretty, sentimental, retired turn,
“ is no such violent hardship. And,
“ harkee, child, I would advise you to
“ submit quietly to your fate, lest you
“ should be hurried to a still greater dis-
“ tance. What think you of a convent,
“ for instance? You have not, I fancy,
“ much nun’s flesh about you, and tho’
“ you

“you cannot have Lord Edmond, yet
 “any husband is better than leading
 “apes. Who knows but you may pick
 “up some straggling heart in the gay
 “metropolis?”

I burst into tears.

“O, my father, what would become
 “of you, did you know the miserable
 “situation of your poor Sophia?”

“Very miserable, to be sure. For
 “shame, child, pluck up your spirits:
 “I am inclined to be your friend, did
 “you not oppose my good intentions by
 “your obstinate perverseness.”

The carriage stopped on a common.
 She produced some refreshments.

“We shall halt at no inn, Sophia: but
 “I have provisions for our journey.”

She

She ate with a good appetite. I refused to taste any thing.

As I pleased. I might both fast and pray if I chose it. For her part she was not so fond of keeping Lent.

This done, we again set off as swift as lightning. The window and blinds on my side were so fastened that I could not let them down. I could neither see nor be seen. In short, about ten at night, I found, by the rattling of the carriage and the noise and bustle in the streets, that we had reached the end of our journey. I now made another attempt to unfasten the window, at the same time screaming for help with all my force; on which, in spite of all my struggling and resistance, the masculine creature bound
a hand-

a handkerchief cross my mouth, and then held both my hands, so that it was impossible for me to disentangle myself from the bandage. I almost put one of my wrists out of joint in attempting to free myself from her painful grasp: my strength was far inferior to hers, tho' I exerted all my force, aided too by rage and despair. At length, the violence of my emotions quite exhausted my spirits, I sunk down in the carriage, and was for some time happily insensible of my misery.

On recovering from my swoon, I found myself on a bed in a decent-looking apartment, while my vile companion and another woman were busily employed in restoring me to a sense of my misery.

“ O see

“ O fee, she opens her eyes,” cried the stranger. “ I declare I never was more
“ frightened in my life. I never saw a
“ fainting fit continue so long. I’ll
“ leave her to your care now, sister, as
“ I am wanted below. Let her endeavour
“ your to compose herself to rest; she
“ stands in need of it after the fatigues of
“ her journey.—But how I stand prating
“ when I have so much business on my
“ hands! I will send you up a bit of supper
“ to your own apartment. It is a
“ handsome one, I assure you, fit for any
“ Lady in the land. You will like it
“ vastly, Miss,” addressing herself to me,
“ when you have time to look about
“ you. A retired street, indeed, no great
“ stirrings, but then as quiet, as orderly a
“ neigh-

"neighbourhood as heart can wish. A
 "very handsome church just facing you.
 "Every thing convenient. You will be
 "as happy as the day is long."

I made no answer to her impertinence.
 She left us. And now 'tis also high time
 for me to bid your Ladyship

Adieu.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

NEXT day I besought my jailer's leave to write a few lines to my father. This she peremptorily refused. Her Lady's orders, she said, were, that I should be debarred the use of pen and ink. Thus deprived of every consolation I abandoned myself to despair, spending my melancholy hours in sighs and tears. The idea of my afflicted parent, and my beloved Edmond, were continually present to my tortured imagination. I took a painful pleasure in indulging my sorrows. Mrs. Ainsley seldom left me, and when she did, took care to secure the door of my prison.

Con-

Confinement, and the unabated grief which preyed upon my spirits, at last, threw me into a dangerous fever. They were forced to procure assistance; but my delirium rendered me incapable of endeavouring to make a friend of my physician, or revealing to him the cruel treatment I had received; and, before I was restored to my reason, they had prejudiced him against me, by telling him I had artfully drawn in a young nobleman, with whom I had, very near, made my escape to Scotland: that so imprudent a marriage would have been the ruin of his fortune, and a wife, like me, every way unworthy of him, a disgrace to his family: that I had been guilty of some indiscretions which
had

had thrown a slur upon my character : that his friends had fortunately intercepted his flight, and had, out of regard for the young gentleman, confined me, till an alliance with a young Lady, every way his equal, and which, but for his imprudent passion for me, would long since have taken place, was concluded.

From this story, the Gentleman thought their conduct extremely just and reasonable; so that when I attempted to excite his compassion, he stopped me short, by relating the above particulars ; adding, he would not meddle in the affair, since he could not blame the family for taking such prudent precautions.

“ Ah,

“ Ah, fir,” said I, weeping, “ some
 “ part of the story you have heard,
 “ is, indeed, true; but my character
 “—Good heavens! who shall dare to
 “ asperse it?”

“ Come, come, child,” cried Mrs.
 Ainsley, who just then entered the
 room, “ none of your theatrical airs.
 “ Your artifices might, indeed, deceive
 “ your infatuated lover; but people, in
 “ their sober senses, are not so easily
 “ taken in.—What think you of your
 “ patient’s health, fir?” turning to the
 doctor.

“ That she is out of danger, ma-
 “ dam; and, that it will be needless for
 “ me to repeat my visits. I will or-
 “ der what is proper for her to take.

“ A

“ A little weakness is all that remains
“ of her late disorder.—Farewell, Miss,”
turning to me. “ The tender treatment
“ you have received, during your illness,
“ convinces me that you are in
“ good hands, who study your true interest,
“ to which an imprudent passion
“ has rendered you blind. Such an
“ unequal match as that you was entering
“ into, could be productive of nothing
“ but misery.”

“ O, sir, you know not the true state
“ of my affairs. What right have they
“ to detain me a prisoner ?”

“ No more, Madam : I shall not intermeddle
“ in so delicate a point. You
“ live at your ease, you want for nothing.
“ People, who know not how

“ to

“to govern themselves, should submit
“to be governed.”

So saying, he took up his hat and cane,
and with a stately air stalked out of the
apartment.

Mrs. Ainsley burst into a provoking
laugh.

“Poor Sophia! You see how easy it
“is to make friends. I’ll warrant you
“thought your charms would at least
“soften the *other sex* in your favour;
“but every man is not a dupe like Lord
“Edmond.”

I answered not her cruel sneers: grief
and indignation tied my tongue.

In a few days I was able to leave my
bed, but still continued weak and in the
lowest dejection. I now again, and that

on my knees, implored Mrs. Ainsley to let me write to my father.

“It is needless, child,” said she, “for now, neither you nor I know how to direct to him.”

“Good Heavens! What do you mean? Ah, with what new misfortune am I threatened?”

“Your father is gone the Lord knows where: perhaps in search of you; so my Lady informs me.”

“Alas! my afflicted parent, who will direct your wandering steps to your unhappy daughter?—O Mrs. Ainsley,” again falling on my knees and clasping my arms about her, “restore me to him, and I promise, nay swear to retire with him to some remote corner of the world,

“ world, where Lord Edmond shall never see me more.”

“ It is not in my power, child, were I ever so willing: tho’ if I could, I should not place much confidence in the vows of a love-sick girl; for you know, vows made in love are made only to be broken. I tell you once more your father has privately left the country, and nobody knows what is become of him: neither, indeed, do they much trouble their heads about the matter.”

“ And has Lord Edmond then withdrawn his friendship—”

“ Absence, child, is a sovereign remedy for love. He begins to be sensible of his indiscretion. His father’s re-

“monstrances, and the charms of my
“Lady, will, I make no doubt, ere
“long, produce the desired effect: he
“will soon forget his little rustic.”

“Ah, I cannot believe Lord Edmond
“is of so light, so inconstant a disposi-
“tion.”

“It is a sign you know but little of
“the sex, Sophia: Violent passions are
“never lasting.”

“Does he then give me up so easily?
“Did he not vouchsafe to make some
“enquiries about me?”

“I know not what enquiries he might
“make; but, 'tis certain, he is still at
“the castle, where Miss G—— en-
“grosses his whole attention.”

“O then

“ O then you need not thus strictly
“ guard me: Let me, at least, go to
“ church, that I may thank Heaven for
“ my recovery, and implore its future
“ protection. It is but over the way:
“ there can be no fear of a discovery.”

“ I will refuse no reasonable request:
“ muffle yourself up, and I will attend
“ you.”

She put the hood of my cloak quite over my face. Indeed I was so altered by my illness, that there was no danger of my being known. We went to prayers. A ray of comfort darted itself into my heart. I returned with a serenity of mind I had not for many weeks before experienced: such is the power of unaffected piety. Never had I prayed with such

K 3 fervour.

fervour. I threw myself on the Almighty, whose watchful providence is over all, even the meanest of his creatures, and, with patient submission, resigned myself to my fate. I called my pride to my aid. I endeavoured to forget Lord Edmond. "He no longer thinks of me," said I, "Why then should he engross my thoughts?" Alas! neither my reason nor my pride was able to efface his charming image from my heart.

One day Mrs. Ainsley having the key of the room in her hand, and pulling out her handkerchief with the other, drew out a letter, also, by accident, which dropped on the floor without her perceiving it. No sooner had she locked me in than I flew to take up the paper.

With

With eager curiosity I ran over the contents, which were as follows. It was from Miss G——.

I Am glad, Ainsley, you received my last : the loss of such a packet might have been of dangerous consequence. You have acted with great prudence, and may depend on being well rewarded for your trouble. Continue a strict guard over the fascinating gipsy. It is still believed by all this family, except Lord Edmond, that she went off with her father. My poor sister suffered from the fury of her Lord, who attributed her flight to her jealousy; nor will he be convinced of the contrary. He has, to my knowledge, employed several peo-

ple in endeavouring to find out the place of her retreat; and, what is very surprising, I have discovered that the Duke joins in the pursuit. This is beyond my comprehension, as I am sure Lord Edmond has not ventured to make him the confident of his passion. This secret is entrusted to none but that meddling old fellow, Osgood.

I believe I told you in my last—I do not recollect whether or not, but no matter—the day of the intended marriage. I contrived to keep Lord Edmond long beyond the appointed hour, and a message from his father, desiring he would be in the way, as he had affairs of consequence to communicate, effectually baulked his fine expedition. I

watched

watched his motions, and found he had prevailed on Mr. Osgood to convey a billet-doux to his Sophia.

Lord Edmond appeared at dinner in great dejection of spirits. I had observed his father, who had not till then joined us, to have been in a violent bustle all the morning, giving orders to his servants. This I saw from my windows, after he had dismissed the stranger with whom he had been shut up in his closet. When he came into the dining-room, his countenance expressed a variety of emotions. I began to suspect he had discovered his son's intrigue, but his complaisant behaviour soon convinced me of the contrary.

“What important business,” said my brother, “has so long deprived us of your Grace’s company?”

“That plaguey law-suit,” returned he. “Edmond leaves all the troublesome part of the business to me.”

“Indeed, Sir,” returned the other, “I neither desire to give you or myself any trouble about it: let justice take its course. If they can produce the lawful heir, I shall with great pleasure resign my pretensions. Heaven forbid I should enjoy a fortune which is another’s right.”

“Ridiculous!—Would you then submit to be cheated by an impostor? But you have no longer any thing of that nature to fear: I defy them to
“pro-

“produce this pretended claimant; and
 “till they do, which I again repeat they
 “never can, you have nothing to fear.
 “You are in possession, which is eleven
 “points in law.”

Mr. Osgood returned just as the cloth was removed. Lord Edmond changed colour at his approach. The old man's countenance was so sad, so woe-begone, that he could not fail to be alarmed. They had no opportunity, however, for any private conversation. We returned to the drawing-room. At tea they joined us. Lord Edmond was as pale as death.

“My Lord,” said he, addressing himself to my brother, “an affair of consequence demands my presence in town: I must set off immediately.”

“What affair?” asked the Duke eagerly.

“I am not at liberty to reveal it.”

No, thought I, that would not be quite so prudent.

“It concerns a friend of mine, in whose affairs I am warmly interested.”

“And when do you return?”

“That is uncertain; tho’ I hope it will not be long before I have again the honor of paying my respects to this family.” Bowing. A servant entered.

“My Lord, your carriage is ready.”

Away scampered his Lordship, making a kind of running bow, as he hurried out of the room, not in the least distinguishing me from the rest. “Mortifying wretch! Go thy way,” thought I,

“thou

“thou romantic knight-errant. My com-
 “fort is, thou wilt have only thy labour
 “for thy pains.—Poor Edmond! thou
 “art fairly outwitted.”

Not till the next day was the syren's
 flight discovered, and 'twas then by
 the Duke's desiring to see her. Here
 was a new bustle. My brother stormed,
 my sister wept, his Grace appeared in
 violent agitation. I'll lay my life the
 gipsy has added this old soul to the
 number of her fools. It is certain he has
 privately sent in search of her. Not, how-
 ever, so privately as to escape my know-
 ledge. Be, therefore, doubly watchful
 of your charge. How I enjoy the mis-
 chief I have wrought! Not a soul sus-
 pects me; for her father, it seems, left
 the

the cottage as soon as his daughter, and has not since been heard of, so that old Osgood could gain no intelligence from him. Why he did not come to the castle, where he imagined you had conveyed the girl, is to me an incomprehensible mystery, which I, however, give myself but little trouble to unravel. My sister believes herself the cause of their flight. This, in confidence, she owned to me. Let them think so still. My brother, on pretence of business, sets off for London to-morrow morning: one may guess his motives. I therefore again repeat, be careful of your charge.

The Duke courts me for his son, and swears he will never relinquish the hopes of an alliance with a family he so much esteems.

esteems. He, also, leaves us on Monday, to join, as I suspect, the other fruitless pursuers. What a dust has this minx kicked up!—Could we but get her abroad to a nunnery—But I have not at present leisure to concert the plan. She is, I believe, very safe where she is; yet I shall not be quite easy till I get her removed to a greater distance. Could I but secure Lord Edmond, of which I do not despair, I care not into whose hands she falls. His father is firmly determined to make me his daughter, and when that foolish son of his finds that his Dulcinea is not to be recovered, who knows but he may condescend to honor me with his hand?—And can I condescend to accept it?—Yes, my pride shall

shall yield to my revenge. By becoming his wife, that now darling passion of my soul will be best accomplished. O how gloriously he shall suffer for the mortification he has made me endure!—Such a wife—I will plague his heart out. Adieu Ainsley, depend on my friendship.

J. G——.

What a letter, my dear Lady Grace! Did you ever hear of so vile, so artful a creature as Miss G——? “Ah!” cried I, weeping, “into what hands am I fallen! Wretches who will stop at nothing to effect my ruin!”—How to escape, now engrossed all my thoughts. I must dissemble.

I folded

I folded up the vile letter and laid it where I found it, then threw myself on the bed. Mrs. Ainsley entered a moment after. She came up to me, the paper in her hand, and rage in her countenance. I affected to be asleep. This artifice calmed her emotions.

“Sophia,” said she, “did you find a letter of Miss G——’s which I dropped in going out of the room? Come, tell me truly, for there were no secrets in it.”

“What letter,” cried I, rubbing my eyes.

“Don’t impose upon me, girl: I am sure you have read it.”

“That I certainly should have done, had I been so fortunate as to find it:

“and,

“ and, since there are no secrets in it,
“ you will highly oblige me, by com-
“ municating the contents.”

“ These evasions will not pass with
“ me. I ask you again, did you, or did
“ you not, see it? Come, I think you
“ will not tell a lye.”

For once, Lady Grace, I was compelled to it, though I did it very awkwardly. She appeared satisfied with my answer; for how could she help herself?

Adieu.

LETTER

L E T T E R VIII.

YOUR Ladyship must have observed, by the character I have given of Mrs. Ainsley, that she was exceedingly vain of her understanding: she was no less so of her person. During our stay at Mrs. Smith's, she had made shift to pick up a lover in the room of Lord Edmond's gentleman, whom she had lost by our expedition. This lover now engrossed a good deal of her time. I was frequently left alone: the door, however, was always firmly secured, so that it was impossible, by that way, to attempt my escape. By the windows it was still more impracticable, as our apartment was on the second floor.

The

The street we lived in was exceedingly retired. A church stood opposite to us, so that I could have no communication with our neighbours. All these circumstances threw me into despair. In vain I racked my brain for an expedient to regain my freedom : the thing appeared utterly impracticable. At length, the thought struck me that I would endeavour to bring Mrs. Smith over to my interest. She was neither so clever nor so cunning as her sister. Her countenance manifested a great deal of good nature and simplicity. She was now frequently my attendant in the absence of Mrs. Ainsley, who, weary of confinement, intrusted me to her care, while she partook of the publick amusements with her lover.

I had

I had not, till this scheme came into my head, examined the pocket-book that Lady G — made me a present of, the fatal night in which I so unfortunately left the castle. I now opened it, and, to my no small joy, found the gift worthy of the generous donor. This little treasure revived my spirits, and hope, that balm of life, enlivened my late dreary prospects. My first care was to ingratiate myself with Mrs. Smith, by my polite and condescending behaviour. I affected to pay great deference to her sentiments and opinion: listened, with attention, to her long and insipid stories: to her family affairs: for dearly did she love to hear herself talk. She was a widow, had but one child, who often

often accompanied her. Of this child, I really became fond. This gained the mother's heart. One day I desired her to get me change for a fifty pound bank-note. She could not conceal her astonishment to find me mistress of so considerable a sum ; and, when she took it from me, made a much more respectful curtsy than usual. When she brought the money, I counted out ten guineas.

“ There,” said I, “ is a trifle I beg
“ you will accept as a proof of my
“ friendship. It is a present for my lit-
“ tle Sally : lay it out for her use.” The
woman stared, and could hardly credit
her senses. She took it, however, and
overwhelmed me with acknowledgements.

“ I am

" I am but a poor woman, Miss,
 " and find it hard work to make both
 " ends meet. Your bounty comes very
 " seasonably to my relief. My sister,
 " indeed, is rich enough ; but then she
 " is stingy as the Duce. And had it
 " not been for her own conveniency,
 " she would not have brought you here.
 " No, she is too proud to look on her
 " poor relations. None of us have ever
 " been a farthing the better for her :
 " she has no bowels, no compassion."
 " That I have fatally experienced,
 " Mrs. Smith ; for is it not cruel in her
 " to confine me as she does ? She thinks
 " I should run away. Alas ! to whom
 " can I fly for protection ? I know not
 " what is become of my dear father,
 " and

“ and I have not another friend in the
“ world. I am an absolute stranger in
“ town; why then should I wish to
“ escape? I live here at my ease, and
“ have nothing to complain of, except
“ want of liberty. Is it not hard to
“ be debarred of every innocent amuse-
“ ment; to be left thus a prey to my
“ melancholy reflections? If it were not
“ for your agreeable company, life
“ would be insupportable.”

“ Why, to be sure, it is hard, Miss;
“ but then, you know, she does not
“ let you go out for fear you should be
“ discovered.”

“ O, by this time, I make no doubt
“ their search is over. Besides, there
“ are a thousand places in this great

“ town V

the “ town where they would never think of
 r in “ looking for me : to the play-house,
 to “ for instance. Does not Mrs. Ainsley
 and “ go there almost every night ? Is she
 cept “ not there at present ? Should she be
 d to “ seen by any of Lord G—’s, or Lord
 nuse- “ Edmond’s family, may it not be the
 o my “ means to discover our retreat ?”

e not At that moment we heard a rap at
 life the door.

“ There she is,” cried Mrs. Smith ;
 Miss ; “ I must run to let her in : the servant
 s not “ is gone on an errand.”

ld be Away she hurried, forgetting the usual
 precaution of locking me in. “ O hea-
 doubt “ vens !” cried I, clasping my hands in
 there a transport of joy, “ here now is an
 great “ opportunity to escape.”

town Vol. I. L I stayed

I stayed not a moment to deliberate, but stealing softly down stairs in the dark, met with no interruption, till I reached the passage. But, ah! Lady Grace, this incident, which appeared so lucky, was but the forerunner of new, and still greater misfortunes. A light now discovered to me several people at the street door.

“ I do assure your Lordship I cannot
“ give the smallest intelligence about
“ her,”

The voice informed me it was Mrs. Ainsley who made this speech.

“ O heavens! can it be my Edmond
“ to whom it is addressed?” This
thought, by the emotion it excited, de-
prived

prived me, for some time, of the power of utterance.

“ My Lady,” continued Mrs. Ainsley, “ some weeks ago, gave me leave “ to visit my sister who was ill. I did “ not so much as know, till your Lord- “ ship informed me, that Sophia had “ left the castle.”

“ Ah ! it is, it must be him ! ” exclaimed I, springing forward. “ Lord “ Edmond will afford me his generous “ protection.”

At the sound of my voice, the gentleman rushed in, and, before I could discover my fatal mistake, I found myself in the arms of ——My pen almost drops from my hand at the dreadful recollection—It was not the welcome

arms of my Edmond that encircled me, but those of the intriguing Lord G—.

I uttered a loud scream; and, with all my force, strove to disengage myself. The effort was vain—my spirits failed me—I fainted.—My fit was not of long continuance—too soon was I restored to a sense of my misery.

“ Dear Sophia, why this terror?” said he. “ You have, indeed, been cruelly used; but I will now be your protector.”

“ You, my Lord!” shrinking from him, and clasping my arms round Mrs. Smith, who had supported my head on her bosom. “ Dear, good woman, be my friend: do not let him take me from you. I am content to stay.

“ Confine

" Confine me as strictly as you please :
 " make me a prisoner for life."

" Oh, ho," cried Mrs. Ainsley, tauntingly. " So then you begin to know
 " when you are well ! But it is now
 " too late. I wash my hands of you.
 " I am sure I have had plague enough,
 " and shall be heartily glad to get rid
 " of my charge. His Lordship will,
 " as effectually, keep you from your
 " Edmond, as I can."

" What do you mean by that, Ainsley ?" said his Lordship.

" Only that she was sent out of the
 " way to prevent a private marriage between his Lordship and her."

" Is it possible ?—and could you, Sophia, indulge so ridiculous a hope ? "

I deigned not to answer. Mrs. Ainsley saved me the trouble.

“O, my Lord, you know not how ambitious we are: we have not yet, I can tell you, relinquished the flattering hope.”

“Well, my dear Sophia,” said his Lordship, attempting to take my hand, “your ambition shall be satisfied, tho’ in a different way. You must give me leave to conduct you to the castle. Your Lady will rejoice to see you. We will find a more suitable husband for you. What say you, my lovely girl?” and in spite of my resistance, he pressed me in his detested arms. “My chariot is at the corner of the street,” continued he. “I ordered it to follow me from the play-house, where, by means
“of

“ of one of my servants, I so fortunately
 “ discovered your retreat.”

“ I cannot yet, my Lord,” said Mrs.
 Ainsley, “ conceive how you found us
 “ out.”

“ Nothing more easy. My servant sat
 “ next you at the play. I thought you
 “ might be able to give me some informa-
 “ tion concerning our pretty fugitive,
 “ so took the trouble to trace you hither.
 “ But come, fetch Sophia her hat and
 “ cloak. It is late: to night I will com-
 “ mit her to the care of a fair friend of
 “ mine, and to-morrow morning we
 “ will set off together for the castle.
 “ There is no longer any thing to appre-
 “ hend from Edmond; by this time,
 “ every thing is in readiness for his mar-
 “ riage with my sister.”

I sighed.

“It cannot be helped, Sophia, men
“will be inconstant; especially when
“their interest is concerned. But I have
“promised to provide you another lover:
“a lover who will do more justice to
“your charms. Come then, my sweet
“girl, trust yourself to my protection.
“Believe me, you have not a more sin-
“cere friend in the world.—Why do you
“not fetch her cloak, Ainsley?”

I fell on my knees in an agony of grief,
and, clasping Mrs. Smith, “Dear good
“woman,” said I, “you are a mother:
“you have not the savage nature of
“your sister: O save me, pity me, do
“not let them tear me from you. All I
“have in the world shall be yours. I
“will be your servant, let me but stay.”

“All

"All you have in the world!" cried Mrs. Ainsley, laughing; "a valuable present to be sure! Here is her cloak my Lord. Shall I equip her for her journey?"

She was going to put it on me—I pushed her from me with all my force.

"What a little tyger! My Lord, I must beg the favour of your assistance."

"Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Smith," screamed I, running behind her; "for the love of heaven, save, O save me from them!"

"What can I do, my dear Miss? You see his honor is resolved to take you with him. And, to be sure, he seems such a sweet, handsome-looking gentleman, that, I think, if you were my own daughter, I could hardly re-

“fufe to truft you with him. To be
“certain, he means you no harm, for
“does he not fay he intends to take you
“back to his Lady? If he was a fingle
“gentleman, indeed, why then, to be-
“fure, you might have your qualms
“and your fears.”

My Lord came round and tied on my
cloak by force. I found my ftrength far
unequal to his.

“Come, my dear little termagant, a
“few days will reconcile you to your
“fate. O what a pleafure it will be to
“me to tame you!” continued he in a
whifper, kissing my averted cheek as he
fpoke. He took my hand. “Let me
“quietly lead you to my carriage.”

“You fhall as foon lead me to my
“death,” cried I with indignation. “I
“have

“ have still one powerful friend who will
 “ not abandon my defenceless inno-
 “ cence.”

“ We shall see which of your two
 “ friends is the strongest,” said the im-
 pious wretch, laughing. “ Mrs. Ainsley,
 “ order my carriage to the door,”

“ Then, my Lord, if you attempt to
 “ force me hence, I will alarm the neigh-
 “ bourhood with my cries.”

“ O child, the neighbourhood is not
 “ so easily alarmed. Riots in the streets
 “ are so common here, that people do not
 “ trouble their heads about them. You
 “ do not know what a sad wicked place
 “ this same London is.”

“ I can give too good a guess, by the
 “ treatment I have received from some
 “ of its wicked inhabitants.”

"My Lord," said Mrs. Ainsley, returning, "your carriage is at the door."

"I must give you a few instructions before I go.—Come this way, Ainsley." and they retired to a distance.

I ran to the door, got it open, and reached the end of the passage before they overtook me. In my flight, my foot entangled in the mat. I fell. My Lord lifted me in his arms. I had hardly time to scream for help before he placed me in the carriage, which instantly drove off. I continued to scream; but, unfortunately, there was nobody in the street to hear me. He put his hand to my mouth, while his other arm pressed me to his breast.

"Now, Sophia, I am master of your fate. A generous one you shall find
"me."

“ me. Be composed then, for your struggling will answer no manner of purpose, unless to fatigue you. And you should consider, my sweet girl, that, by thus exhausting your strength, you put yourself more in my power, were I inclined to ravish those favours which, if you do not exasperate me, I would wish to owe to your kind and voluntary compliance. Of this, however, be assured, you must and shall be mine.”

“ Never, never, my Lord, while I have life. I would a thousand times prefer death to dishonor.”

“ Dishonor, Sophia! Some girls, in your situation, would view the affair in a very different light. That seducing beauty of yours was bestowed on you to make your fortune, not to be
“ buried

“buried in the arms of a clown; and
“people of your own rank, alone, would
“think of you for a wife. A wife!—
“What a dull, insipid thing is that!
“Fate has more transporting joys in store
“for you, my lovely girl. Instead of
“being subjected to the tyranny of a
“furlly husband, jealous of his preroga-
“tive, you shall be mistress both of me
“and of my fortune. I will know no wish,
“but to make you happy: my liberality
“shall be boundless as my love.”

While he spoke, I softly let down the
glass, and, putting out my head, called
“Help! help!”

He pulled me forcibly to him, and
drew up the window, in spite of my re-
sistance.

“Take

" Take care, Sophia, you do not
 " make me desperate by your obstinate
 " perverseness. You see nobody pays
 " the least attention to your ridiculous
 " screams. How, indeed, should they
 " hear your soft harmonious voice, when
 " the carriage drives at this furious rate
 " over the rattling pavement? Indeed,
 " indeed, my pretty Sophia," (laughing)
 " you are securely in my power, and
 " neither man nor d—l shall tear you
 " from me. I wish we were fairly out of
 " this cursed town, and then you may
 " amuse yourself with squalling as loud
 " as you please. Not that your cries can
 " answer any manner of purpose here
 " but to teaze me. And I can tell you
 " my sweet girl, it will be much more
 " for your interest to place some little
 " con-

“confidence in my generosity, than to
“exasperate me by your provoking ob-
“stinacy.”

I burst into tears. My strength and
spirits were quite exhausted. I found
myself extremely ill.

“Let down the glasses, my Lord, I
“faint,” said I.

He hastily obeyed: then, drawing me
towards him, he made me recline my
head on his breast. I was quite passive,
almost deprived of sense and motion.
The air, however, a little revived me.

“Dearest Sophia,” said he, “how I
“love you! O that I could inspire your
“gentle bosom with a mutual flame!”

“Death,” cried I in a faint voice,
“will soon deliver me from your cruel
“power.”

“Par-

“ Pardon what is past, my lovely girl:
 “ for the future I will owe every favour
 “ to your amiable condescension. If the
 “ most ardent passion that ever warmed
 “ the breast of man can merit a return,
 “ then may I hope, from my Sophia’s
 “ goodness, I shall not always sigh in
 “ vain.”

I disengaged myself from his arms.

“ I am too ill to contend with you.
 “ For heaven’s sake let me die in peace,
 “ O my father! O Lord Edmond! did
 “ you but know—”

“ Lord Edmond! Ah, dare you to
 “ my face, avow your passion for my
 “ hated rival?”

“ Alas! my Lord, Lord Edmond is
 “ a man of honor. I could not help mak-
 “ ing the comparison between the treat-
 “ ment

"ment I have received from you and
 "him. O that he was now here to pro-
 "test me!"

"Again!—Perverse, ungrateful girl,
 "take care. You will not let me be ge-
 "nerous."

We were, by this time, some miles
 out of town. The carriage, at length,
 stopped.

"My dear girl, our troublesome
 "journey is finished at last. The house,
 "you see, has, for some weeks, been
 "prepared for your reception; so con-
 "fident was I, that, guided by my
 "ardent love, I should be able to dis-
 "cover your retreat. It is yours, my
 "charmer; so are the servants, the equi-
 "page, and all that belongs to it, while
 "I am only your guest."

"A most

“ A most unwelcome one, my Lord.
 “ I neither desire to see you, nor your
 “ detested house. How hard is my fate,
 “ to be thus hurried from one pri-
 “ son to another; and, that too, in
 “ a land where we boast of liberty !”

“ My dear girl,” returned he, with a
 provoking laugh, “ did you never hear
 “ that might overcomes right ?”

The door opened. An elderly woman
 approached the carriage, accompanied
 by some other servants with lights.

“ I am glad to see your lordship.”
 “ And, are you not also glad to see
 “ your Lady ? Here she is, and the
 “ fairest Lady in the land. — Open the
 “ chariot door.”

She did so ; and officiously approach-
 ed to help me out. Resistance would
 have

have been in vain. Besides, I felt some degree of comfort from the presence of one of my own sex, though I could hardly suffer more than I had already done from the vile Mrs. Ainsley. With a sorrowful heart I suffered myself to be led, or, rather, dragged into the house. An elegant supper was, soon afterwards, served up. I did not taste a morsel. My Lord was extremely urgent with me to take some refreshment. Finding all his entreaties ineffectual, he summoned the house-keeper, and ordered her to show me my apartment.—I threw myself at his feet.

“ O, my Lord, pity me !”

“ What is the dear trembling girl
“ afraid of ?” said he, raising me in his
arms. “ How easily is your virtue alarm-

“ ed ?

“ed? Upon my honor I did not, for
 “this night at least, mean to disturb
 “your repose; but your terror is so se-
 “ducing, and such a convincing proof
 “that you think yourself absolutely in
 “my power, that, by my soul, I can
 “hardly resist the temptation.”

“Kill me, Sir, at once, for your
 “dreadful words are worse than daggers
 “to my heart.”

“Sophia, the mere possession of your
 “person does not suit my delicacy,
 “would not satisfy my ardent passion.
 “No, my lovely girl, that is my last re-
 “source. I will first try to soften you in
 “my favour, if I fail in that, then, in-
 “deed, I will not answer for the conse-
 “quence of your perverseness.—But go,
 “my lovely Sophia, you stand in need
 “of

“ of rest, go and indulge it, without ap-
 “ prehension. On my honor you at pre-
 “ sent have nothing to fear from me.
 “ Good night then, my soul’s treasure,
 “ may angels watch over you, while you
 “ are lulled in soft repose. One kiss be-
 “ fore we part.” Snatching my hand.

“ Ah, my Lord, be uniformly gene-
 “ rous, and trust to my gratitude.”

My alarming situation compelled me
 to this detested dissimulation. His eyes
 sparkled with joy.

“ Transporting hope! Sophia, you
 “ shall govern me at pleasure, I will
 “ know no will but yours. On this *band*,
 “ only, will I presume to impress my
 “ lips, till my tenderness and love soften
 “ that gentle heart in my favour, till I
 “ can communicate to it some part of
 “ that

“ that flame which consumes mine : then
 “ shall I receive, not be compelled to ra-
 “ vish the bliss of blisses.”

I strove to disengage my hand, which
 he still held between his.

“ Let me breathe,” said he, “ one sigh
 “ more on this dear hand—”

— “ Pray, my Lord—”

“ Go then, my life, my joy, my trea-
 “ sure: all that my soul holds dear.”

Mrs. Green led me to an elegant apart-
 ment, and offered to undress me. I beg-
 ged she would leave me. With a low
 curtsy she instantly obeyed. I then dou-
 ble-locked the door, examined every
 part of the room, to see if there was any
 secret entrance to it. I could see none.
 Soon after I flung myself on the bed,
 without taking off my cloaths, and gave
 my-

myself up to my melancholy reflections. My own situation, dreadful as it was, admitted of some consolation, as I was determined to die rather than forfeit my honor: but, alas! thought I, what misery must my poor father suffer, not knowing what is become of his unfortunate daughter!—Lord Edmond too!—I was almost suffocated with my sighs and tears, till quite exhausted by fatigue, and the variety of emotions I had undergone, sleep, unwished for, composed my troubled spirits.

The END of the FIRST VOLUME.

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